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Wm. W. W. W.

Wm. W. W.

December, 1894.

## POEMS: OLD AND NEW



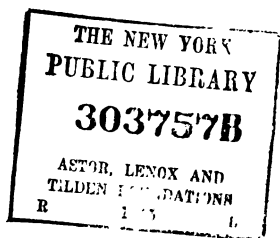
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Heinrich 19 January 1945

TO  
MY WIFE



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## PRELUDE.

(ABOVE GLEN FRUIN.)

*A CLIMB, in clear September weather,  
Up hills we should have climbed together,  
You, dear, and I,  
Through belts of heather.*

*But eastward to my westward, nigh  
That Northern Sea we sojourned by,  
You kept your tether,  
And let me fly.*

*Ah well: the wanderer from the nest  
Comes from his wanderings back to rest;  
His happy fate  
Blends rest and quest:*

*So, lark-flights in high noon and late  
On summer eves accentuate  
The love that's best  
For bird and mate,*

*For me and you. But sitting here,  
With all this ample prospect near—  
Broad glen, deep glade,  
Mountain and mere—*

*I feel your east my west pervade,  
Your magic plays with light and shade,  
Makes far things clear,  
While near things fade ;*

*For, like a necromancer's spell  
That works some wonder passing well,  
As fair to see  
As strange to tell,*

*The thought of you brings back to me,  
With yet a finer wizardry,  
The surge and swell  
Of memory.*

*Past pleasures that were sweet to know,  
Old summers in their sunny glow,  
The dear delight  
Of long ago,*

*When life was young and skies were bright,  
And Lands of Promise lay in sight  
Beyond the bow  
That spanned the night—*

*These, on my mount of vision here,  
Come back to me with smile and tear ;  
The thought of you  
Has brought them near ;*

*Has given the sky a lovelier blue,  
And opened to my longing view  
Vistas more clear,  
Horizons new.*

*Where Fruin Water eastward goes  
A sacred river flows and flows ;  
For Eden lies  
About me close.*

*All scenes, beneath whatever skies,  
Your love has gladdened to my eyes,  
Are they not those  
That round me rise?*

*And is not this the magic wrought  
By one inspired, inspiring thought,  
That true love sees  
What true love sought?*

*The gates of vision part with ease  
When lovers will and poets please :  
So Shakspeare taught  
The centuries.*

## CROCUSES.

YELLOW and purple and white,  
Snow-white and lilac and gold,  
Crocuses, my crocuses,  
Peering up from the mould ;  
These like fingers of flame,  
These in a raiment of snow,  
And these of the dusky hue of thoughts  
Cherished from long ago.

Last year, last month, last week,  
My patch of garden was bare,  
No glimmer of green or gleam of gold  
Or sign of life was there ;  
It was only this morning early  
That Spring came by this way,  
And the gifts she leaves for a token  
Were only mine to-day.

She delayed and delayed her coming,  
For March was fierce and strong ;  
The bitter wind of his fury  
Kept Winter here too long ;  
But at last this golden morning  
Stirred every patient wing,  
And down the shaft of a sunbeam  
Glided the gentle Spring.

Hark, how the sparrows twitter,  
For joy of the warmer sun !  
They began their mating a month ago,  
And their nesting will soon be done ;  
But the thrush has a gladder welcome,  
Which he'll sing in the mellow eves,  
I have heard him trying it over  
In the trees forlorn of leaves.

Forlorn ? Not now, nor ever,  
Since Spring is here again,  
And crocuses, my crocuses,  
Herald her happy reign ;  
Yellow and white and purple,  
Snow-white, blue-veined, and gold,

The signs of a new possession  
That is old as the world is old,—

New life, new love, new leafage,  
For ever old and young,  
In all the flowers that open,  
In all the songs that are sung ;  
And hers is the beautiful mission  
To blossom and bloom and sing,  
My crocus-bringer, my passion,  
The Maid of the Months, the Spring.



## AN AUTUMN FLITTING.

My roof is hardly picturesque—  
It lacks the pleasant reddish brown  
Of the tiled house-tops out of town,  
And cannot even hope to match  
The modest beauty of the thatch :  
Nor is it Gothic or grotesque—  
No gable breaks, with quaint design,  
Its hard monotony of line,  
And not a gargoyle on the spout  
Brings any latent beauty out :  
Its only charm—I hold it high—  
Is just its nearness to the sky.

But yet it looks o'er field and tree,  
And in the air  
One breathes up there  
A faint, fresh whiff suggests the sea

And that is why, this afternoon,  
The topmost slates above the leads  
Were thick with little bobbing heads,  
And frisking tails, and wings that soon  
Shall spread, ah me!  
For lands where summer lingers fair,  
Far otherwhere.  
I heard a muttering,  
Saw a fluttering,  
Pointed wings went skimming past,  
White breasts shimmered by as fast,  
Wheel and bound and spurt and spring—  
All the air seemed all on wing.  
Then, like dropping clouds of leaves,  
Down they settled on the eaves—  
All the swallows of the region,  
In a number almost legion—  
Frisked about, but did not stop  
Till they reached the ridge atop.

Then what chirping, what commotion!  
What they said I have no notion,  
But one cannot err in stating  
There was very much debating.

First a small loquacious swallow  
Seemed to move a resolution ;  
And another seemed to follow,  
Seconding the subject-matter  
With a trick of elocution.  
After that the chirp and chatter  
Boded some more serious end, meant  
For a quarrelsome amendment ;  
Bobbing heads and flapping wings,  
Eloquent of many things,  
Gathered into lively rows,  
'Pro's' and 'con's' and 'ayes' and 'noes.'  
As the clatter reached my ears,  
Now it sounded like 'hear, hears' ;  
But again a note of faction,  
With a clash of beaks in action,  
Gave an aspect to the scene  
Not exactly quite serene.  
Fretful clusters flew away,  
All too much incensed to stay ;  
Wheeled about, then took a tack,  
Halted and came darting back.  
Others, eager to be heard,  
Perched upon the chimney-top,

Chirped, as they would never stop  
Loud and fluent every bird.

But the turmoil passed away :  
How it happened I can't say,  
All I know is, there was peace.  
Whether some more thoughtful bird  
Said the quarrelling was absurd,  
And implored that it should cease ;  
Whether what appeared contention  
Was a difference not worth mention,  
Just some mere exchange of words  
Not uncommon among birds,  
I have only my own notion,  
You may make a nearer guess ;  
All at once the noise was over,  
Not a bird was now a rover,  
Some one seemed to put the motion,  
And the little heads bobbed ' Yes.'

O that sudden resolution,  
So unanimously carried !  
Would they'd longer talked and tarried,  
With their fiery elocution !  
What it bodes I cannot doubt ;

They were planning when to go,  
And they've settled it, I know;  
Some chill morning, when the sun  
Does not venture to shine out,  
I shall miss them—overnight  
They will all have taken flight,  
And the summer will be gone.

## A NOVEMBER IDYLL.

LIKE a guest who lingers on  
When his fellow-guests have gone  
Homeward, onward, every one,

Laggard Autumn tarries yet,  
In the gloom her tears beget,  
After all her suns have set.

Somewhere, in the sodden ways,  
Robin pipes his homely lays,  
Minstrel of the dullest days ;

But the missel-thrush alone  
Tries a song of bolder tone,  
For the singing-birds have flown.

Grapes ungathered, on the wall,  
Hang with apples yet to fall,  
But the fruits are garnered all.

In belated fields the grain  
For the gleaners waits in vain,  
No more comes the harvest-wain,—

No more till the mellow eves  
Crown another season's sheaves  
With the gold the Summer leaves.

Summer? But that far-off glow  
Lies beyond the Winter's snow,  
And the mists hang thick and low;

Even Winter waits afar  
While the mists the prospect mar,  
Shrouding sun and moon and star.

Winter bides his own good time :  
Dazzling sun and diamond rime  
Best befit a Christmas chime.

Yet the cheery firelight glows  
With the summers of the rose,  
Summer suns and winter snows.

Sunshine of the suns of old,  
Gathered in an age of gold,  
Stored far down in sunless mould,

This for me, with blaze and spark,  
Shall dispel the dreary dark,  
Wake the music of the lark.

Curtained from the outer gloom,  
There shall be within my room  
Time of leafage, time of bloom.

Here, for lack of flowers that blow,  
Tales of old romance shall show  
Flowering loves of long ago.

Here, for lack of birds that bring  
All the songtide of the Spring,  
Poets in their quires shall sing.

Here a ruddy hearth shall make  
Winter's cheek its roses take,  
Red of holly, snow-white flake.

So, though laggard Autumn still  
Lingers at my window-sill,  
Merrier times shall come at will.



## THE WANDERERS' RETURN.

ON a day a while ago,  
When the corn was newly carried,  
And the late-come summer tarried  
For a glimpse of winter snow,  
Verse of mine, in fashion slight,  
Chronicled the swallows' flight :  
Many a month has gone since then,  
And the land is green again.

Though the cuckoo will not sing  
Till he's very sure of Spring,  
Tempted by this April sun  
Summer sends her vanguard on.  
Here they come with wheel and bound,  
Flashing down and flying round,  
Twittering briskly as they fly,—

For a host of cares are theirs,  
Family matters, nest affairs,  
To be managed by-and-by.  
Since that fine September day,  
When they gathered on my roof,  
Swallow-wings have gone astray,  
Swallow-flights have held aloof,  
Far away.  
Where the melon-orchards lie,  
Where the golden orange-groves  
Dip to sunny plains of sea,  
Rise to domes of sapphire sky,  
There the wandering swallow roves :  
England yields to Italy.

Happy were the fate, to follow  
Summer with the flying swallow ;  
Happiest he, for though he roam,  
He is everywhere at home.  
Here in England, who so well  
Knows our life of field and town,  
Looks from closer quarters down  
On our scheming,  
On our dreaming,

Dwelling with us where we dwell?  
No ungenerous critic he ;  
But a neighbour who perceives,  
From beneath our very eaves,  
More than other neighbours see,  
Might embroil us with a word  
Were he not a friendly bird.

Safer friend or more discreet  
Surely it were hard to meet,  
For in his unconscious keeping  
Secrets of all lands are sleeping.  
Could he but his thoughts unravel,  
He might give us books of travel ;  
Tell us how the world wags on  
In Bavarian Ratisbon ;  
What unlovely purpose lurks  
In the Czar's mind or the Turk's ;  
What the sleepless Sphinx would say  
If she spoke upon a day ;  
Whether Tiber ever dreams  
Of his old imperial streams ;  
Whether love the fairer shows  
On a cheek of English rose,

Or amid the dusk that lies  
In a southern beauty's eyes.

These are things that move him not ;  
In so practical a bird  
Much romancing were absurd :  
Here his heart is, on the spot.  
He would like to know, no doubt,  
When the hawthorns will be out,  
And the May-flies all about ;  
But the thoughts that please him best  
Centre in a certain nest,  
Where he hopes, his mate and he,  
Some domestic joys to see :  
More important they than we !

## THE COMING OF MAY.

THAT laugh? Where was she, the newcomer?

Lo, she stept, a fair maiden and tall,  
With a face like the first day of summer,  
From the calendar hung on my wall.

Conceive my delighted amazement

When she danced like a bird on the floor,  
Not caring a bit what my gaze meant,  
Or only laughing the more.

Though her face seemed unknown among  
faces,

I had read of such beauty in books,  
The poets had pictured her graces,  
And the painters had painted her looks,

But herself and her marvellous presence  
Were strange as the strangest delight ;  
From what fairy pavilion, what pleasance,  
Had she come to me thus in the night ?

Was she Flora, that fabulous goddess,  
Or some nymph of the woods and the  
bowers,  
That she wore on her skirts and her bodice  
All the wealth of the woodland in flowers ?  
For a flounce she had kingcups and pansies,  
For a necklet anemones fair,  
And as though to delight one with fancies  
Wordsworth's celandine peeped from her  
hair ;

On her breast was a nosegay of lilies,  
With violets showing between,  
And the gold of late daffadown-dillies  
Seemed to crown her and make her a queen ;  
Her sceptre—she was really so queenly—  
Was a spray of fresh hawthorn in bloom,  
Which she waved so benignly, serenely,  
That its scent was a joy in my room.

‘Don’t you know me?’—she asked, as discerning

A look of surprise in my face—

‘I am May, at this moment returning,

Delighted to take up my place ;

The night was poor April’s, the daytime

Sees me again Queen in the land—

Will you give me good hope for my Maytime ?

Will you take a fair gift from my hand ?’

‘Ay, maiden,’ I answered, ‘most gladly,

If the gift be as fair as the word,

But the years have gone sorely and sadly

Since the best of your praises were heard ;

You greet me with flowers and with fairness,

But how will you deal with us, pray ?

Will your east wind not bite us to bareness,

And your smiles not be wiles to betray ?

‘We have loved you, and sung and enshrined  
you,

We have reared to you maypoles of mirth,

But a word, lovely May, will remind you

Of the ills you have wrought in the earth ;

The old found you fair and were daring,  
The young saw you blithe and were gay,  
But those you cut down without sparing,  
And these you have stricken, O May !'

I ceased, for the maiden was weeping,  
Her hands were upheld to dissuade ;  
Who was I, all this blame to be heaping  
On the head of so gentle a maid ?  
'Nay, nay, do not spurn me,' she pleaded,  
'I was never so cruel as this'—  
And I wept all as sadly as she did  
For the things I had said so amiss.

'The wind is not mine—I entreat it—  
But it blows where it lists, as it will ;  
As the frost slays the frail blooms that  
meet it,  
And the snow falls so white and lies still ;  
In my heart, as your poets have told me,  
Are sunshine and song and glad play,  
What they call me, and make me, behold me,  
I am May, and the Queen of the May.'



She smiled through her tears as she vanished,  
And that smile lingers on like a gleam,  
While the howl of the east wind is banished,  
And I live in the light of my dream ;  
For the poets are true, and their story  
Is of her, all of her, whom to see  
Was a glimpse of sweet Spring in her glory,  
And perpetual Maytime for me.

## ON THE BANKS OF THE WYE.

O LIFE were worth the living here,  
To hold these natural charms in fee,  
To breathe this fragrance, and to be  
The guest of beauty year by year!

How blithely in the fresh-leaved woods  
The blackbird and the whitethroat sing,  
The cuckoo, eloquent of Spring,  
Gladdens his own green solitudes;

And all the air is rich with May,  
With odours of the lilac sweet,  
And all the grass about my feet  
With golden buttercups is gay:—

A new bright land, a sky as bright,  
New beauty fairest in the birth,  
For ever thus new heavens and earth,  
To me an everlong delight.

## PANSIES.

### I.

FLOWERS, sweet flowers, for Psyche my bride,  
I planted them long ago ;  
I tended them well at eventide,  
And the morrow saw them blow—  
Lily and rose and violet,  
Tall moon-daisies and poppies fine,  
Patches of fragrant mignonette,  
And wings of columbine :  
And I said when I saw how fair they were,  
'O glad will my Psyche be !  
The fairest flowers for a bride more fair,  
And the fairest bride for me.'

### II.

But though lilies were fair and daisies tall,  
And the poppies fine to see,

There lacked the sweetest flower of all  
In the bridal company ;  
For I missed the purple pansies set  
In the midst of my garden beds—  
There peeped the timid violet,  
And the harebells hung their heads—  
But the heartsease, lost to the light and dew,  
Lay hid in its earthy rest,  
And I could but weep, for my bride, I knew,  
Loved ever the heartsease best.

## III.

A running brook like a girdle bound  
My Psyche's bridal home,  
And the sheltering hills that rose around  
Shut out whoso would come ;  
But the light of heaven was free to fall,  
And the birds were free to sing,  
And free were the holy angels, all,  
Immortal gifts to bring.  
'O soft from the south, and warm from the west,  
Blow, winds, on my garden fair,  
And dews, sweet dews, in the hours of rest,  
Fall gently everywhere !

The daisies shall dance with a new delight,  
The poppies a prouder lustre spread,  
The lilies put on a lovelier white,  
The roses a richer red ;  
And Psyche, my bride, on her bridal day,  
When her costly gifts displease,  
Shall hide and gather them all away,  
But tenderly cherish these.'  
Then sweet, O sweet, were the tears I shed  
For hope of the coming years ;  
But alas and alas for the pansies dead,  
And bitter were still my tears !

## IV.

Psyche and I on a day were wed,  
Long and long ago ;  
She wore a snow-white wreath on her head,  
And her robe was white as snow—  
A snow-white bride without and within,  
O whiter, purer than I !  
But her love was able to purge my sin  
As the peaceful days went by.  
And here, in the midst of her garden-bowers,  
We loitered and lingered long,

The dews lay thick on the grass and flowers  
At the hour of evensong ;  
The lily drooped her delicate head,  
With a blush from the crimson west,  
And the queen moss-rose, in the queenliest bed,  
Was royally hushed to rest ;  
An odour stole up from the mignonette,  
Half-hidden, but nestling nigh,  
With the soft sweet breath of the violet,  
Who closed her tremulous eye ;  
And the harebells waving under the trees  
Seemed to ring us a marriage chime,  
While the poppies sang to the passing breeze  
The song of their summer prime—  
Then softly, silently, over all,  
The twilight shadows fell ;  
The deepening shadows of evenfall,  
And all was well.

## v.

Day by day, as the swift days fled,  
Love grew between us as true love grows,  
On the dews of the night and morning fed  
And the breath of the budding rose ;

And I, too eagerly all content,  
Forgot my pansies, forgot my pain,  
And the days of the summer came and went,  
And never came again.

Never again, for a shadow fell  
That dimmed the lily on Psyche's cheek ;  
She cherished a sorrow she could not tell,  
And longings she dared not speak—  
But often, in all those happy days,  
When the hours went lightly by,  
She would lift her head and her eyelids raise  
To scan the breadth of sky ;  
And beyond the hills with the sunset bright,  
And the clouds that hung afar,  
Her eyes sought yet some deeper light  
In the wake of the evening star :—  
Then while she breathed the faintest sigh  
She would smile with the fondest cheer ;  
But I knew that she longed for wings to fly  
From her narrow dwelling here.

## VI.

And when the summer suns had set,  
And the summer flowers had blown,

And the ground with colder dews was wet,  
O then I was all alone !  
Alone in my narrow garden, shut  
From the larger world of men,  
Where the bounds my selfish love had put  
Grew narrower on me then.  
The light was gone from the far-off sky,  
The stars were hidden o'erhead ;  
I buried myself and longed to die,—  
To die and sleep with the dead.  
Long days and nights, alone and still,  
In the darkness and the cold,  
I sat with a feeble heart and will,  
And wept for the days of old,—  
For the hopes of youth, and the sweet content,  
And the heart that feared no morrow ;  
And I wept until all my tears were spent,  
But without surcease of sorrow.  
And all the while in my garden lay  
Sere leaves of the summer, dead ;  
And weeds,<sup>1</sup> almost as many as they,  
Grew rank and flourishèd.



## VII.

At last I rose like a man, and turned  
As one who hath work to do ;  
I cast the noxious weeds to be burned,  
And buried the dead leaves low :  
And day by day, with a pious care,  
I kept my garden clean ;  
I planted flowers and herbage there,  
Where the pestilent weeds had been.  
So, day by day, as my heart grew strong,  
And stronger my feeble will,  
The sorrow that held me bound so long  
Wrought in me less of ill—  
And I dug a grave in a hidden bed,  
Under ashen boughs in leaf :  
'For here, in silence and shade,' I said,  
'I will bury all my grief!'—  
I buried it surely under the shade,  
Where a woodland quiet slept ;  
And I ceased to murmur while I prayed,  
And was patient while I wept.

## VIII.

The Spring came back, the laughing Spring,  
With snowdrops after the snow,

The eager thrush began to sing,  
And all the flowers to blow,  
And my heart rejoiced with everything  
As it had done long ago.  
My heart was glad, for on a day  
When the joyous season gave  
All young delights that crown the May,  
I sought that hidden grave ;  
And there above the fresh sods, wet  
With drops of morning dew—  
Some full in bloom, some budding yet—  
A crowd of pansies grew !  
Sweet heartsease for a heart resigned  
That travailed long in vain,  
Whose travail brought the better mind,  
With its own surcease of pain,—  
The larger love of humankind,  
And the loss that grows to gain.

## IX.

I stood half-dreaming for a while,  
And would have mused for hours,  
But like a sunbeam Psyche's smile  
Flashed on me from those flowers.

D

I looked, and lo, a thing of light,  
And like an angel grown,  
She seemed to float into my sight—  
My Psyche, all my own !  
She sang, 'O joy for life and love,  
Where life and love abound ;  
The blessed sky bends broad above,  
The world lies wide around :  
And here an open heart shall win  
The gentle angels down,  
Who make the sinful pure of sin,  
And give the just their crown !'

A. G.

ON this May morn how brightly rose the sun  
And shone into our hearts that drooped and  
wept,

Longing for light: and looking towards the  
light

How fondly we remembered thy dear words—

‘I will go out again when the sun shines!’

Then with a momentary joy we felt

Thy brightness in the sunshine, and we knew

Thy lovely spirit to be shining down

From God’s own Heaven on us, whose joy  
thou wert.—

God’s angel and ours also, our dear child

And His also, who gave thee unto us

To train a little while for His bright fold,—

Though in our human weakness we must  
weep

Yet not for thee we sorrow, not for thee,  
Whose beauty, so divinely pure on earth,  
Is now of Heaven heavenly: but we pray  
That thou mayst be for ever unto us  
The same dear child and angel, of our fold  
And God's, a lovely and a guiding star,  
Peacefully shining down on us from Heaven,  
And ever beckoning and drawing us  
Up those high paths which thou so soon hast  
scaled,  
Until at last we meet thee where thou art,  
And all our little fold again be one!

## CHILD AND ANGEL.

(A. M.)

SWEET child, sweet angel now !  
Dear to all angels and to God, Most High,  
Who giveth His beloved sleep :  
The sleep of His beloved on thy brow  
Lies softly, and thou sleepest with no sigh,  
While we are sad and weep.

Our tears awake thee not ;  
We kissed thee, but thine eyes were closed  
the while ;  
Thy lips, that loved us, gave us back no kiss ;  
But over all thy face a lovely smile  
Slept with thy sleep, as though thy mortal lot  
Shared an immortal bliss.

O silent lips and cold !  
The prattlesome well-head of laughter wild,  
And all the joyous music of thy heart,  
Thou more than child :  
Cold lips, alas ! and speechlessly apart,  
Dumb with the secret that may not be told.

O motionless hands and feet !  
The feet that never ceased to dance and play  
Through all thy little life's long holiday ;  
The tireless hands and free,  
Already skilled in simple infancy  
To loving labours sweet.

With thee came joy, came light,  
Thine eyes gave clearer brightness to the sun,  
Thy beauty made the dullest things seem fair ;  
Now are the light and joy gone with thee,  
gone,  
Leaving behind the utter gloom of night,  
And emptiness and sadness everywhere.

No more, O nevermore  
Thy laughter greets us with its sudden cheer ;  
No more, O nevermore thy voice makes glad

The hearts that echoed all its joy before,  
The hearts that were content while thou wast  
    here,  
And in thy long long absence must be sad.

God gives thee rest and sleep,  
For thou art His beloved, O sweet child !  
Rest and deep sleep to senses worn with pain ;  
To weary eyes that wept to see us weep  
Slumber most mild,  
From which thou hast no will to wake again.

Soft sleep, and sound, and sure,  
Beyond whose glooms the Everlasting Day  
Dawns perfectly, wherein all sorrows cease,  
And neither toils, nor pains, nor tears endure,  
But love lives on, and joy, and blessed peace,  
Never to pass away.

Could we but follow thee  
With one long gaze into thy world of light,  
Although on earth thereafter we might be  
Blind from the blessed sight,  
Yet should the joy of seeing thee suffice,  
Well won at greater pain and heavier price.



And O, that not in vain  
Our eyes were strained with looking, and  
    our ears  
With listening, for some sign or spoken word  
Wherewith to satisfy our helpless tears,  
And raise the sunken flame of hope again,  
And heal the broken hearts that cry unheard!

Dear soul, it cannot be :  
But love is strong to bind as death to part,  
And all our hopes and all our prayers for thee  
Fulfil themselves full surely in the heart ;  
For hearts whose only thoughts are thoughts  
    of love  
Have intuitions of the world above.

And such are ours, who wait  
An open revelation at the last ;  
But even now imagine thee, and guess  
By what attainments of the blessed state,  
With what immortal memories of the past,  
Thou shalt go on to perfect happiness.

We wept who knew not yet  
The blessedness of that supreme awaking,

The painless peace of that abiding sleep ;  
Hopeless and helpless, while our hearts were  
    breaking,  
And all in darkness faith declined and set,  
What could we do but weep ?

We wept, while others there,  
Hidden to us, but manifest to thee,  
Smiled forth sweet welcomes to thy parting  
    soul—

Angels of God, the whitest and most fair,  
Who crowned thee with the shining aureole,  
And bore thee heavenward in their company.

And fairest of that host,  
Brightest and fairest angel of them all,  
Did not he greet thee with his cherub face,  
Our other darling, gone from our embrace,  
Caught up to heaven one day at evenfall,  
When first our hearts were stricken, and  
    hope was lost ?

There, in God's holy peace,  
Abide with him ; our love saith even so !  
There, where eternal youth shall keep thee fair,

And death shall come not, nor the years  
    increase,  
And what our sorrows are thou shalt not know,  
For but our joys and hopes shall reach thee  
    there.

Yet, if thou mayst, sweet child,  
Be near us, and be with us, and make bright  
With gleams of thy fair heaven our darkened  
    home!

Come now, as in the days of our delight,  
In dreams of happy days, our darling, come!  
And we shall bless thee and be reconciled.

In hopes, in memories,  
In all the tender thoughts that raise the soul,  
O come to us! and though weary be our way,  
We yet shall look with longing to the skies,  
And know that thy dear spirit, day by day,  
Calls us and draws us to its own bright goal.

## NEW YEAR'S DAY : A BIRTHDAY.

A NEW year's greeting, with the old years' love,

To her whose love is never old or new :

A new year's blessing, all the old above,

To her who blesses all—dear wife, to you !

Gifts will be yours to celebrate the day

That marks your own sweet advent, and  
the year's,

Fair gifts that bring you, as the givers pray,

The hope of much delight and end of  
tears :—

And these among your fairest gifts are mine,

The dearest of all gifts to you and me,

One heart with yours that never knows decline,

One love with yours to all eternity,—

Nor new, nor old, in all devotion true,

For ever, and for ever, all for you.

## HUSBAND TO WIFE.

WHEN thou art here I look into thy face,  
And in thine eyes, and find a beauty there  
Surpassing any other, the most fair,  
That lives in classic lips and lines of grace :  
For while thou hast the beauty that we trace  
In form and feature, and in brows and hair,  
A deeper charm, a loveliness more rare,  
Beams from thy soul and beautifies thy place.  
And when thou art away, my heart's sole  
queen,  
Thy image like a presence day and night  
Dwells with me, and thou art, as thou hast  
been,  
My constant angel, ever wise and bright,  
My guide, while not another stands between,  
Nor any eyes but thine have been my light.

## A MEMORY.

How much of precious joy, that leaves no pain,  
Lives in the simple memory of a face  
Once seen, and only for a little space,  
And never after to be seen again :

A face as fair as, on an altar pane,  
A pictured window in some holy place,  
The glowing lineaments of immortal grace,  
In many a vague ideal sought in vain.

Such face was yours, and such the joy to me  
Who saw you once, once only, and by  
chance,

And cherish evermore in memory

The noble beauty of your countenance,—  
The poet's natural language in your looks,  
Sweet as the wondrous sweetness of your  
books.

## ON A CLIFF.

### I.

FOAM, white foam of the curling waves,  
Creamy spray from the crags and caves,  
Coil and crescent and surging leap,  
Ripples that break where the waters sleep,  
Tremulous voices, deep and low,  
In the everlasting ebb and flow,  
Clamorous voices, deeper than all,  
Where the long waves break with a sudden  
fall—

Infinite movement, infinite glee,  
O mighty and matchless, the sea! the sea!

### II.

Merrily, merrily, waves that beat  
Over the pebbles under my feet ;  
Merrily, merrily, waves that roll  
Into the bay in a silver shoal ;

Merrily, merrily, winds that play  
With the white foam-crests and the creamy  
    spray,  
Merrily go the dance to-day!  
For the wind may blow and the sun may shine,  
And never again the sea be mine;  
Never again, as now to-day,  
From the low cliff-head and the mouth of  
    the bay  
To the dim horizon, far away—  
    Mine, O mine,  
    To the uttermost line,  
Where the white bird sinks like a speck in the  
    spray—  
    Mine, O mine,  
    And share it who may,—  
The blue-bright distance, the cloudy grey,—  
    It is mine, it is mine,  
    For a single day.

## III.

Dreaming awake,  
    At leisure I lie,  
On the top of a cliff  
    Not many feet high,



With the grass at my head,  
And my face to the sky;  
And the rumble  
And tumble  
Of breakers below,  
With the splash of an oar,  
And the sounds from the shore,  
And a boatman's song  
As his boat glides by,  
Mix, mingle, and swell,  
Like the parts of a choir;  
And the cadence rolls on,  
Now lower, now higher—  
But the music is one;  
And a voice that I know  
Seems to breathe through the whole,  
In a faint underflow  
From the soul to the soul—  
Softly and slowly,  
Slowly and sweetly,  
Her voice who is lovely  
As still she is lowly,  
And may I but love her  
As she loves—completely.

## IV.

O lullaby, lullaby,  
Soothing my soul ;  
Multitudinous murmur,  
Vociferous roll—  
Through my dreamy half-slumber  
What phantasies stream !  
All the marvels of story  
Float into my dream.  
Nymphs, goddesses, heroes,  
Make mischief, make love,  
In the water below me,  
The cloudland above ;  
And I, while the phantasy  
Holds me in thrall,  
For mirth, and not mischief,  
Make love to them all.

## V.

So, pleasantly dreaming,  
At leisure I lie,  
With the grass at my head,  
And my face to the sky ;

E

And I care not how noisily  
Goes the world by—  
Who is up, who is down,  
Matters little to me,  
Taking my holiday  
Here by the sea.

## VI.

Fresh to all comers,  
Fresh for all summers,  
Older than Adam,  
Younger than I—  
The ages in cycles,  
The strong generations,  
The sects and the systems,  
Revolve and pass by ;  
But thou, through the ages,  
Thy beauty renewing,  
Art ebbing and flowing  
With ceaseless acclaim ;  
Still changing, and ranging  
Through wide alternations,  
But coming or going  
For ever the same.

Now, like a child  
With its toys and its baubles,  
Tossing thy shells  
In delight on the shore ;  
Then, as with laughter  
The children run after,  
Back to thy depths again,  
Bringing up more.  
Airily, fairily,  
Over thy waters,  
Dance the white sails  
In the light of the sun ;  
Hearts that beat cheerily,  
Ever unwearily,  
Dancing there merrily,  
Bless thee, each one.

## VII.

Changing, still changing,  
The winds bring commotion,  
And, whirled from their centre,  
Thy forces, old Ocean,  
Spread ruin and slaughter—

Then woe to the mariner,  
Woe to the wanderer,  
Sailing the sea :  
Angels ! smile down on him,  
Comfort him, speak to him,  
Winds only shriek to him,  
Waves only frown on him,  
Ruthless the water,  
And impotent he.

## VIII.

Cold blows the wind  
On the cliff where I lie,  
And the first little star  
Has come out in the sky :  
Over the sea,  
From the east to the west,  
Deeper and deeper  
The soft shadows rest,  
And the land-birds fly off  
To the sheltering nest.

## LOCH DUICH.

SWEET is the calm that loves to rest,  
Loch Duich, on thy gentle breast ;  
Soft are the shades that deepen there  
The stillness of the evening air :  
Loch Alsh may swell with wind and tide,  
And storms may fret Loch Carron's side,  
But thou art screened from wind and sea,  
And scarce a ripple breaks o'er thee.  
Barks that have sailed to east and west,  
And borne the buffets of the seas  
Beyond the outer Hebrides,  
Come to thy quiet bay to rest ;  
And there at anchor, hushed and still,  
With drooping sails, like folded wings,  
In all the peace the twilight brings,  
They sleep, secure from harm or ill.  
And we, like them, from travels wide  
Tarried to slumber at thy side,

And share with them and thine and thee  
A gladness that will never cease,  
For constant in our hearts shall be  
The memory of thy perfect peace.

## LOCH KATRINE.

### I.

How calm and fair, how very fair thy face,  
That August evening when I saw thee first !  
Thy perfect beauty like a vision burst  
Full on me, and I lingered for a space,  
Breathing the soft enchantment of the place,  
To feel myself in Fairyland, immersed  
In lore and legend of an age that nursed  
The finer fortunes of a fairy race :  
Ben-A'an and Ben-Venue had held me bound  
In loving reverence and in awe made sweet  
By all the beauty of the nearer ground,  
The Trossachs, rising lovely from my feet,  
But that first gleam of thee, that sudden sight,  
Filled me and overwhelmed me with delight.



## II.

Wearing thy poet's praises as a crown  
Thy beauty crowns him with its own excess,  
And if he gave thee glory, thou no less  
Hast given him profusely of thine own ;  
Thy fame and his, inseparably grown,  
And thine and Ellen's loveliness, express  
One immortality, one loveliness,  
Whereof we see the sum in thee alone.  
Loch of the lovely isle and silver strand,  
In whose bright waves new beauty ever  
breaks,  
In whose deep heart, where cloud and sky  
expand,  
Perpetual joy, perpetual music wakes,  
Fairer than all thy sisters in the land,  
Thou art thyself the Lady of the Lakes !

## EDINBURGH.

O GREAT in history and fair of fame,  
City of gardens and of terraces,  
Whose monumental glories, more than these,  
Have given to thee beauty and a name,—  
Thou Modern Athens! all in all the same  
With that fair city of Themistocles,  
For thine are all the arts, the sciences,  
And genius crowns thee with the world's  
acclaim.

Between the Pentland mountains and the sea  
I saw thee lying like an open scroll;  
Mountains scarce older than the heart of thee,  
Ocean scarce younger in its latest roll—  
A sight to satisfy the eyes that see,  
And broaden the horizon of the soul.

## THE HESPERIDES.

ONCE, walking in a land of dreams,  
Through winding valleys, by the side  
Of forests all alive with song—  
A region where delicious streams  
Flowed under low-roofed arches long,  
From hollows of a meagre span,  
And out into the light among  
Luxuriant foliage, making wide  
The rivers into which they ran—  
I came into a crowded place :  
Men, women, all with eager eyes  
Pressed up from all the lanes, and past  
Right onward. I among the last  
Broke in and followed with surprise,  
Not knowing whither or what the chase,  
Or asking ; till a backward surge,

An ebb of that advancing flood,  
Rolled on us, scattering those who stood  
In hosts too closely drawn before—  
When, like the gathering waves that merge  
Each into each and storm the shore,  
That sea of human creatures rose,  
In wave on wave and host on host,  
And stormed, and fell, and some were  
lost,  
And some were shattered in the close.

‘What means all this?’ I asked of one  
Who looked less eager than the rest;  
‘These people come,’ he said anon,  
‘From north and south and east and west;  
And ever thus they strive to win  
The golden apples of the trees  
Of the divine Hesperides.  
On either side the gardens lie,  
But only few can enter in,  
Though many still there be that try.’

And then I saw, on either side,  
The close-fenced gardens ranging wide,

With golden fruit on trees of gold,  
And hands that snatched it, scrambling high,  
From which it sometimes fell, and rolled  
Among the restless standers-by.  
And some there were who caught and ate,  
And with the golden food grew fat ;  
And some there were who bought and sold,  
And some who hoarded up their gold ;  
While still more loudly rose the din  
From those without and those within ;  
And underneath each golden tree  
I saw a laughing devil grin—  
He laughed a fiendish laugh at me.  
And they that ate and fattened, died ;  
And they that only bought and sold  
With too much barter soon grew old ;  
And they that hoarded up their gold  
Went mad, and others overbold  
Took what the owner could not hold ;  
But all alike unsatisfied  
Still clamoured with the self-same cry—  
' Who now will show us any good,  
More golden fruit, more golden food,  
That we may eat our fill and die ? '

I turned away, but ill at ease,  
Reflecting, as I hastened back,  
'Is this the sacred ground, are these  
The golden-fruited apple-trees  
Of the divine Hesperides?  
I saw no maidens, but alack  
A grinning fiend beneath each tree,  
Who laughed a devilish laugh at me:  
I saw not, lying at the gate,  
That dragon which, when he passed in,  
The strong-armed Theban bound in chains'—  
And as I walked the hour grew late,  
And with the growing hour the lanes  
Whence all those crowds emerged were still.  
Behind me faintly rose the din,  
Before me on a sudden stood  
One most unlike that multitude;  
His countenance was all aflame,  
Full, as it seemed, of godlike will,  
But softer than a woman's face,  
And glorious with unearthly grace.  
He said, 'I knew your thoughts, and came  
To lead you whither you would go;  
Then follow me!'

I followed slow,  
And through the narrow lanes he led,  
The long long-winding lanes where grew  
In wild festoons the hedgerow brier ;  
The bluebell pale and pansy true,  
And shy sweet-smelling violet  
Were there ; and, bending overhead,  
A sky in all whose deepening blue  
The sunset glimmered like a fire.

Far in our front a light was set,  
And to that light our steps we bent,  
My guide unfolding as we went  
Dark sayings, counsels of the wise,  
Old creeds and Attic mysteries.  
I feasted on his words—he taught  
How many a thing had passed away  
From common apprehension, still  
Leaving the substance and the thought  
As sound as in the olden day :  
That, like bees' honey in the cell,  
Wisdom, a sweeter honey, lay  
In legend and in parable :  
And well for him who, seeking truth,

And finding what he went to seek  
In those old fables of the Greek,  
Cared not to quarrel with the shell,  
But took the meaning of the myth,  
And carried in his heart therewith  
An odour of perpetual youth.

While thus my guide discoursed we came  
Into a circular space, and there,  
Above a narrow gate, that light  
Beamed on us from a silver star,  
Bright equally by day and night.  
And all around the gate were met,  
Some firm of foot, some halt and lame,  
Young men and maidens pressing in ;  
And standing with their faces set  
In shadow, to conceal their sin,  
Were others, not so fair as they,  
Who beckoned them another way.

And then I saw the halt and lame  
Give heed to what the tempters said,  
And follow limping where they led :  
But not the less the strong and wise



Took counsel of that heavenly light,  
Bright equally by day and night—  
For them no other tempters wait;  
They entered at the narrow gate;  
And three fair maidens, in whose eyes  
The light of many systems burned,  
Stept down to meet them, smiled, and turned  
Their steps into a wide recess,  
A garden, open to the sky,  
But hidden from the passers-by;  
Where grew in all their loveliness  
More flowers and sweeter than we see  
In all June's rosy galaxy;  
And bowing low with golden fruit  
Stood many a widely spreading tree,  
With waters moistened at the root  
Which elsewhere in the garden shoot  
Their spray in fountains overhead.

And one of those three maidens said,  
'This place is yours, the fruit is sweet,  
Go pluck it from the trees and eat:  
Ripe apples of the purest gold,  
Full fruitage of the new and old—

Apples of knowledge—take and eat !  
The fruit is no less fair than sweet.'

Then did the second maiden say,  
'Here is the Tree of Life, which gives  
For every cluster plucked away  
A larger one another day ;  
And whoso eats of that fruit lives.  
Look, here is plenty, take and eat !  
The fruit is no less good than sweet.'

The fairest last, whose tender name  
Was fondly whispered where I stood,  
Said in a gentle voice the same :  
'The fruit is fair, the fruit is good,  
And here is plenty, take and eat !  
If good and fair then is it sweet.'

My guide led softly from the place,  
And dimly now I saw his face,  
But in the shadow of those trees,  
Before my dream had blown away,  
I fancied that I heard him say,—  
'These are the true Hesperides !'

## GALATEA.

### I.

SORE-SMITTEN, my shepherd, my dearest,  
Struck down, and for me !  
There is none of all men that thou fearest,  
None like unto thee.  
There is none with thy strength and thy  
sweetness,  
Though lovers remain,  
No love with thy dear love's completeness,  
Nor will be again.  
But thy face was a mark for his madness,  
Thy love for his hate,  
The monster that envied our gladness,  
And compassed thy fate ;

And all day, in all desolate places,  
    I bemoan thee and weep,  
Afar from thy loving embraces,  
    Astray like thy sheep.  
Nor at night, when my sisters are sleeping,  
    Shall slumber be mine,  
For the thought of the rest thou art keeping,  
    The sleep that is thine ;  
But from comfortless morrow to morrow,  
    More weary and sore,  
My sorrow shall darken with sorrow  
    The sea and the shore.  
In the dim ocean-deeps, the recesses  
    Where no billows curl,  
But the sea-weed that paves them caresses  
    Bright coral and pearl,  
Wherever I roam, and wherever  
    The sad waters hear,  
Thy name shall be murmured, and never  
    Lack tear upon tear.  
Thyself and all thine will I cherish  
    With worship how true !  
If the thought of thee ever shall perish  
    Then I perish too.

## II.

There are loves that end soon in forgetting,  
And partings that leave no regretting,  
And sighs for light loves unregarded

By upland and lea ;

And a woe that is deeper than sighing,  
And a love that is ever undying,  
And a moan with the voice of the moaning

That troubles the sea.

Alas for the light-hearted maidens,  
Who dance with delight to the cadence  
Of harps that ring ever more gaily,

Not mindful of me !

With only a sigh for their sorrow,  
Till new mirth comes with the morrow,  
They mourn for the loves and the lovers

That falter and flee.

But thou didst not shun me or falter,  
Thy love was no love that could alter,  
Love deep as the heart of the ocean,

As strong and as free ;

And with all the desire and devotion  
Of the earth and the heavens and the ocean,

My love and my faith and my sorrow  
Are constant to thee.

## III.

O cruel, O treacherous-hearted,  
The Cyclops that slew thee and parted  
Two lovers, so loving and true,  
With the stone that he threw !  
Deep slumbers the stone,  
    Deep down, O deep down,  
    In the sands of the sea—  
Where it hears not the moan  
    That makes answer to me ;  
Where it feels not the swell  
Of the sad waves that tell  
    Of my sorrow for thee :  
And so may it sleep,  
    Deep down, O deep down,  
In the sands of the deep !  
But on him be my curse,  
    On the monster that slew thee  
    For lust and for gain—  
That his fate may be worse

Than the dread gods ordain  
For slayer or slain.  
For thee, O my love,  
May the dear gods endue thee  
With sweet life again—  
Restore thee, renew thee,  
And heal all thy pain !  
O my heart, O my love,  
Save the gods heed above  
I cry but in vain !

## IV.

O cry with my cry, if ye love me,  
Give help in my need !  
And the gods who are mighty above me  
Will help me indeed.  
Sweet sirens, who woo to your bosoms  
Poor mortals that stray,  
Where the flower of your love only blossoms  
To fade and decay,  
Tempt the sailor no more from his sailing  
To rest in your bed ;  
Be your harps' only strain a bewailing  
For my dearest one dead.

Forget the delight of the dances  
That gladden the strands,  
The glow of the passionate glances,  
The touch of true hands :  
Yearn not for the fair Eldorados  
That hang in the west ;  
The tremulous shores and the shadows  
Of Isles of the Blest ;  
But bend your sad harps to the waters,  
Whose moan is for me,  
The saddest of all the sea's daughters,  
Alone in the sea.  
Let lightness and laughter be over,  
And weeping begun,  
For his heart of all hearts, for my lover,  
Struck down and undone !  
Sweet sisters, O weep with my weeping,  
And pray with my prayer,  
That the generous gods, in whose keeping  
All true lovers are,  
Who heal all the poor broken-hearted,  
And cherish the slain,  
Will bind us again who are parted,  
And bless us again.



Great gods! be not deaf to my praying,  
Deny me no more—  
Slay him who wrought ill by his slaying;  
The slain, O restore!  
Be vengeance where vengeance should chasten,  
Where justice should be,  
But pity where pity should hasten—  
Have pity on me!

## v.

Alas, and alas!  
There is no god that hears,  
And I sink with my sorrow,  
And droop with my tears;  
But the boon is denied me  
To die with the years.  
I haunt like a shadow  
The vales where his sheep  
Stray helpless without him,  
And bleat to the deep;  
And I seek, for my solace,  
The dim wooded ways  
Where he wooed me and won me  
In those happy days.

I linger in places  
More dear to me now,  
For his fondest embraces,  
His tenderest vow ;  
And I weep as I wander,  
Or nurse in my breast  
The joy of the loving  
By which we were blest.  
Till, dreaming, I dream  
That the old days remain,  
For he comes, and I seem  
To embrace him again,—  
He leads me at sunset  
To join in the dance,—  
But the spell is soon broken,  
I wake from my trance :  
That dark rock looms o'er me,  
Behind and before,  
And I fly from its shadow,  
And plunge from the shore,  
To bear in my bosom  
My woe evermore.

\* \* \* \*

## VI.

Rejoice, O my sisters,  
Come, dance in the sun!  
No more shall I borrow  
The tears of your sorrow,  
My mourning is ended,  
My weeping is done.  
In the deep ocean-hollows  
I cried for my dead,—  
In the perilous places  
Where light never enters,  
And joy never follows,  
And love's sweet embraces  
Are joys that have fled.  
From my cold ocean-pillow,  
Beneath the broad billow,  
Rose ever my cry;  
And the waves in their beating,  
With restless repeating,  
Made moan of my moaning  
All under the sky.  
But the dull gods were sleeping,  
Their hearts were unbending,  
There came no fair ending

To all my despair—  
Alas ! so I murmured,  
Profane in my weeping,  
Nor knew they had heard me,  
And granted my prayer.

## VII.

But now, from my hiding,  
I came to this valley,  
Than all valleys fairer  
By love's long abiding :  
With fear I drew nearer  
This spot ever dearer,  
This place ever saddest,  
Where last my love lay ;  
But here—am I dreaming,  
And is it but seeming ?—  
My lover lies beaming,  
With laughter the gladdest  
That welcomes the day.  
Look, here in the mosses  
He laughs as he lies,  
All the old love possessing  
His lips and his eyes.

The soft mosses mingle  
To make him a bed,  
They clothe the bright shingle  
That pillows his head ;  
And where the grim boulder  
Rose colder and colder,  
Sank deeper and deeper  
To make him a grave,  
Fair boughs bend above him,  
And sunbeams that love him  
Slide bright through the blossoms  
That over him wave.  
Hark ! sweet is the music  
That wakes in his singing,  
Shrill notes that are ringing  
With rapturous joy :—  
Dear heart !—to recapture  
The passionate rapture  
Of all thine old loving,  
My beautiful boy.  
Dear heart !—here beside thee  
I lay me and hide me,  
And find in thy bosom  
Love's haven of rest :



The days and the morrows  
Shall know no more sorrows ;  
The dear gods have blessed us,  
And we shall be blest.

## VIII.

For my love is a fountain that rises,  
And my love is a river that flows,  
And never a day  
That passes away,  
Nor a whole long year's surprises,  
Nor an age as it comes and goes,  
Can make him weary or old,  
Feeble or fickle or cold ;  
For merry the time that flies is,  
And the sun and the rain and the snows,  
And the breath of the wind that blows,  
Shall make him ever more bold—  
Broad to bear on his bosom  
Her of his heart's devotion,  
Down to their rest in the ocean ;  
Bright to cherish her beauty,  
Deep to draw her to duty,

Great by the gifts he shall give her,  
Bountiful, beautiful river.

## IX.

Fleet from thy nest in the mosses,  
Out from thy hiding and on,  
Over the stones and the crosses  
Let us make haste to be gone.  
Fly with me, run at thy fleetest  
Down to the strands of the deep,  
There shall the arms of my sweetest  
Clasp me, to have and to keep;  
There, where the day has no going,  
And night no coming for thee,  
And the joy of thy heart's overflowing  
Shall fill the broad space of the sea,—  
O there, with no waiting or weeping,  
Immortal by lives that combine,  
Thy love shall be mine for the keeping,  
And mine for ever be thine.

## ARETHUSA.

DIAN, goddess and huntress, sweeps on :  
For her nor fatigues of the way  
Nor lures of the shade  
Check the swift chase that she loves :  
But goddesses goddesses are,  
And nymphs are but nymphs.

Arethusa, worn with the hunt,  
Halts where a stream glints white at a bend  
    of the woods,  
Halts to disrobe and enjoy  
The white cool water, the pause  
From the rush of pursued and pursuers.  
Softly the greensward dips to the river  
From bushes of laurel that rise and embower  
A space of smooth moss 'twixt the woods and  
    the water.



Here Arethusa, aglow with her running,  
Loosens her zone, slips her robe from its  
fastening,  
Slackens the golden coil of her tresses,  
And lo, at a movement, a touch,  
A light quick sweep of the hands,  
A backward toss of the head,  
She stands forth beautiful, naked, divine.  
Over her shoulders, half veiling the whiteness  
Of breasts that might pillow the face of Apollo,  
Ripples her hair—  
Golden and gleaming, ravishing, radiant ;  
All the rest of her bare to the sunshine,  
Bright as the light and lovely as morning.  
Fairer ! O fairer !  
Fairer than evening,  
When all on a sudden the full-orbed moon,  
serene,  
Breaks from the fleecy bands of cloud about  
her,  
And floods the watching earth, the tranquil  
heaven,  
With light and beauty.  
Timidly, quickly,

She runs to the river,  
Lingers a moment with virginal shyness,  
Then, with a laugh,  
Leaps in among eddies  
That gather to meet her ;  
While the lithe waves lave  
Her round glowing limbs,  
And the deep mid-stream,  
In its green shimmering shadows,  
Clasps and embraces her, holds and possesses  
her.

But below the long waves,  
In the dim green depths,  
Lies the god of the river.  
Was he sleeping down there—  
As a god may sleep—  
Deep-browed and brooding ?  
And did there float into his sleep a dream of  
delight,  
A vision of beauty, as beauty is seen not of  
men ?  
Nor sleeping, nor dreaming now, but awake  
is Alpheus,

Wide-eyed, open-armed, to receive the nymph  
who comes nearer,

Wading breast-deep in the swelling midst of  
the stream.

Nothing she knows of the gaze fixed longingly  
on her,

Nothing she recks of the fate that awaits her  
at hand:

Alas! had love in the smitten breast of  
Alpheus

Been placid and calm,

Calmer and cooler than god's love ever was  
yet,

He had won—who can tell?—or he had not  
lost Arethusa.

But the love that leaped in his heart,  
And bounded in fiery beats along pulses of fire,  
Brooked no delay.

Like the breath of a flame that flies to the  
kindling light

He rose at a bound,

And fain had caught the startled nymph in  
his arms.

But she fled in dismay,

With terror that gave her wings,  
Fled back to the woods, and beyond,  
Through valleys that dipped to the sea,  
Over hills that rose to the sun,  
League upon league upon league—  
Conscious, without looking back,  
Of a breath as of fire that pursued her,  
Of the gaze of fierce eyes of desire  
That drew nearer and nearer and nearer.

Fleetest of nymphs in the chase,  
Fleet as the silver wheels that bore Dian  
along,  
Arethusa could match for a while the speed  
of Alpheus;  
But a nymph is at last but a nymph,  
And a god is a god.  
She faltered, borne down by her fears,  
While the reeling miles on miles  
Wrought in her brain a tumult that worked  
her woe.  
Scarce an arm's length off is the god;  
A moment, a breath, no more,  
And the prize of her beauty is his;

But all in that moment a cry,  
A half-uttered call on the virgin huntress  
    and goddess,  
Brings succour, brings rescue.  
Where the nymph falls fainting, the ground  
Opens a moss-green hollow, dewy and soft:  
And when, with a thrill of delight, Alpheus  
    stoops low to uplift her,  
She fades, she is gone!  
There laughs in her place, in his face,  
    a fountain as clear  
As the light in her eyes;  
In the ripple that plays  
On the wave-chasing waves  
Is the radiant gleam of her hair;  
The rounded tides that rise and fall on the moss  
Are her lips, unsealed and sealed again in  
    a kiss;  
The deeper swell and fuller curves of the  
    stream,  
Where it gathers itself for its onward plunge  
    and flow,  
Are her breasts—round, supple, beautiful,  
    glowing with light.

It is she! It is she!  
Alpheus clutches his prize:  
The mossy hollow that gave escape to the  
    nymph  
Receives him too:  
He mingles his stream with the flowing fount  
    of his love,  
And the twain are one.

Under land, under sea,  
Twin streams, twin lives, twin lovers, they  
    run together;  
A glorious story wedded them, and Time  
Through many a thousand years has kept  
    them one.

## ENGLAND AND GREECE.

### I.

QUEEN, O Queen of the Sea !  
Mighty by hearts that are steadfast and ships  
that are strong,  
England ! O hater of wrong !  
This thing that thou doest is all unworthy of  
thee :  
Never hath England fettered the brave and  
the free ;  
Never till Egypt groaned, and her people  
uprose,  
Did fleet of thine, that had scattered thy  
proudest foes,  
Strike at the weak and crush them—never  
till then !  
Penance be thine, O mother of nations and  
men,

Shame for that tyrannous thing thou didst  
    amiss,  
But let not thy penance be this.

## II.

What name stands fairest by thine?  
What fount hath fed thee with wisdom and  
    made thee bold,—  
What name but Greece? And did her lore  
    divine  
Give thee no higher courage than to spurn  
The lessons thou didst learn?  
Great England, nurtured by that Greece of  
    old,  
Is it, then, nought to thee  
That Moslem banners wave in Thessaly?  
That vales made lovelier by Apollo's face,  
And hills that were the high gods' dwelling-  
    place,  
That these are Greek no more, and glad no  
    more,  
But from Olympus to the Ionian Sea  
Are darkened by disaster and made sore  
By tyranny and by treachery?



Nay, for though glory of arms endure but  
a day,  
And the glory of pride be quenched, and of  
beauty cease,  
Her gods and her greatness are glories that  
pass not away—  
Immortal Greece !

## III.

Out of the depths she cried to thee, then,  
When the hordes of the Crescent were drawn  
afar  
For the Moslem's war,  
And thine heart went out to her once again ;  
Thy pledges were fair, thy words were brave,  
And cheered by these she strove no more  
with fate,  
But waited, nothing loth to wait,  
Certain that thou at last wouldst help and  
save.

## IV.

At last ! and there did come at last a time  
When thou couldst help her, when a word  
from thee

Had made her all that she had hoped to be ;  
Not the proud mistress of her olden prime,  
The Greece of Marathon and Thermopylae ;  
But once again a country, once again  
The ruler of her lands from sea to sea,  
The mother of one people brave and free,  
The Greece of Byron's dream and Shelley's  
strain.

## v.

That time was thine, and thou hast let it  
go.

Now, rashly prodigal of thy ships of war,  
With bigger cannon than carried Trafalgar,  
Thou settest thyself again to overthrow  
A helpless city, a land that looked to thee,  
A little loyal land that claims its own.  
Beware ! beware ! for the record shall all be  
known ;

Thou wert great, so great, how great ! in the  
ages gone—

Let the sons of thy sons deem thee great in  
the ages to be !

[NOTE. This poem refers to the blockade of the Greek  
ports by ships of the Great Powers (England being one)

in the early part of 1886. The Greeks resented the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria, as involving the transfer of thousands of Greeks to another nationality, and demanded as compensation that the boundary between Turkey and Greece should be that originally fixed by the Berlin Congress. The Greek Government made large naval and military preparations for asserting the rights of the Greek nation. But the Governments of the Great Powers saw that another outbreak of hostilities in South-Eastern Europe might have grave consequences, and, led by England, they took peremptory steps to prevent it. Perhaps they were right; but the claims of Greece were nevertheless such as appealed very strongly to all lovers of the land of Homer and Aeschylus and Plato.]

## IN THE SOUDAN.

### I.

ENGLAND! Alas for evil days,  
And these who leave thine olden ways,  
Tame guardians of thy right and of thy fame,  
Who lightly hold thee grown too great  
With motherhood of lands afar,  
Fair lands that love thy fairer name,  
And rear thy race, and share thy fate,  
Under the western sun and eastern star.  
Theirs but to keep thine empire, won  
When valorous deeds were dreamed and  
done ;  
To bind and cherish the hearts that yearn  
From many a distant shore and sea,  
With love that pines and hopes that burn,  
Hearts of thy sons that yearn to thee.  
The duty and the glory both were theirs—

Duty not done, and glory spurned :  
Yet good, not ill, for ill returned  
Greets thee with Australasia's prayers,  
Who crowds her decks and bids thee take  
Her arms, her men—hers, but thine own  
indeed—  
Thine for the love of kindred and the sake  
Of England's honour in England's need.

## II.

Thy need, my country? Yes, thy bitter need,  
To purge thine honour and put off thy shame :  
Witness thy martyr-hero, soldier-saint,  
Who loved thee, trusted thee in very deed,  
Bearing a blessed promise in thy name  
To the beleagured and the worn and faint,  
Of help that never came.  
For their sake and for thine,  
Over the desert, through a perilous land,  
Taking his life in his hand,  
He went as on a mission half divine.  
He went, not doubting that thy word was sure,  
And gave thy word, and bade the weak  
endure

A little longer, a little longer yet ;  
But when deliverance came not, and instead  
The fiery Arab swooped upon the plain,  
Piling his heaps of slain,  
Leaving his own brave hosts among the dead,  
O then, dismayed  
That England, Christian England, should forget  
Her honour and her debt,  
He prayed to thee—how fervently he  
prayed !—

Great God ! how great a heart was in that cry !—  
Not for himself : he stood his ground to die :  
But all for these whom thou couldst yet  
deliver,  
These fast in fortress-walls as in a grave,  
But thine, *then*, thine to save—  
Not now for ever.

## III.

In vain ! thou knowest he cried to thee in vain !  
Thine ears were filled with babbling, and thy  
streets  
With tumult : there was yet to lose or gain  
The battle of the Franchise and the Seats.

Thy Ministers, adding millions to the roll,  
And bidding for their suffrages to be,  
Heard not these pleadings of an anguished soul,  
Or hearing heeded not his agony.

Though hearts of men might bleed and break,  
And his brave heart be martyred for their  
sake,

Reform could never wait ;  
Retrenchment was the watchword of the State ;  
And Peace!—they cried ‘ Peace ’ when there  
was no peace—

What matter, if with more and more delay  
They kept the worst away  
Till peace should come indeed, and danger  
cease ?

Alas! the worst was near ;  
For while thy street processions, with fickle  
cheer,

Acclaimed the foolish and cried down the wise,  
The shrieks of Tokar sounded to the skies :  
More than two thousand men  
Were slaughtered there and then,  
Close under England’s eyes.

And scarcely had the desperate wailing ended

When yet a thousand more,  
At Sinkat, at thy very garrison's door,  
Fell in as fierce a slaughter, undefended.  
Then Berber, brave in vain,  
Next of the wretched Cities of the Plain,  
Sank with her thousands slain.  
And last, Khartoum:  
O horrible, horrible doom!  
And he, thy best, the bravest of thy brave,  
So prompt to succour and so fain to save,  
He whose all-blameless name,  
To thy reproach, thy glory, and thy shame,  
Lives on the loudest trumpet-tongue of fame,  
Lies in a nameless grave.

## IV.

Alas, my country, that these things should be!  
Dear England, dearest when thy need is most,  
God grant it thee  
To win again the jewel thou hast lost—  
The name that knows no stain,  
And that great heart again  
To which no friend or foe shall cry in vain!



## A DEAD STATESMAN.

### I.

STATESMAN who never stooped to guile,  
Nor rose by stratagem, nor sued for place,  
Nor tripped another foully in the race,  
Nor won adherents with a feigning smile—  
Such wert thou, O true man, true gentleman ;  
Whose old-world courtesy in this newer day  
Was like a welcome fragrance by the way,  
As where, in some green corner of the street,  
A spray of woodbine makes the pavement  
sweet.

True man, true gentleman, whose courses ran  
Straight onward, in the open light,  
To whatsoever end was right,  
At whatsoever cost or pain ;

Though here were primrose paths to tempt  
thee down,

Or there a giddy eminence thou couldst  
gain—

Straight onward, with thy conscience for thy  
crown.

Thy conscience ; for that precious light of  
God—

Blurred when a statesman makes his service  
tend

To personal honour or to private end—

Burned in thee with a never-fading flame,

And dignified thy work and marked thy name,

And lighted all thy steps till all were trod.

## II.

Not easy was the task :

Rudeness assailed thee, mutiny gave thee care,

And wild ambitions crossed thee here and there

Wearing a show of loyalty for a mask.

But, slow to blame and strong to bear,

Thy gentle spirit held its way,

And did the duty of the day,

And kept thine honour clean, thy record fair.

## H

## III.

Alas, thy place will miss thee ; and alas,  
Thy comrades and thy friends, to whose  
endeavour

Thou wert a standard just and true for ever,  
All these will miss thee. But alas, alas,  
The whole wide realm will miss thee : richer  
then,

When thou wert as a light to other men,  
So now the poorer, lacking from afar  
The peaceful shining of that guiding star.  
Yet not in vain a good man lives and dies :  
The high example, faded from our eyes,  
Lives in our lives, and, mixing with our blood,  
Grows to a larger consequence of good.

## IV.

And not in vain, O true of heart and tried,  
Hast thou so sweetly lived and calmly died ;  
This hast thou shown us, for the world to see,  
How fair and noble a man's life may be.  
And more than this : for thou hast made it  
plain  
That mere ambition is of all things vain,

But simple worth, with modest aspiration,  
Will charm a people and rejoice a nation.  
O not indeed in vain, brave heart and best,  
Thou so hast lived, so entered into rest,  
For all our English life receives from thee  
New warrant for its best simplicity.

## v.

Sleep on and take thy rest, true soul and  
pure ;  
All England loves thee ; England's love is sure.  
Honour for honour, faithful care for care,  
She guards the record thou hast left so fair,  
That all her sons may find a model there.

1886.

## HUNGARY.

ONE land there is that never brooked the yoke  
Of haughty conqueror or tyrant king ;  
One land that in its own most perilous hour  
Bent to its will the conquering arm, and broke  
The tyrannous purpose as a feeble thing ;  
Supreme, whoever else might wear the flower.  
These are thy glories, England ; thou art she  
Whose proudest boast is ever to be free.

And of these others to be named with thee,  
Brave by the prowess of their peoples, great  
By deeds that make and gifts that grace the  
State,  
Let English valour pledge to Hungary.  
Land of proud freemen and a warrior line,  
Land that hath burst its fetters and kept its  
fame,  
This is a land that knows no breath of shame,

This is a name that gives no shame to thine ;  
For while a crowd of princedom rise and fall,  
And empires vanish, and dynasties go down,  
This old-world kingdom and its Iron Crown  
Live with a history that outshines them all.  
So brave a history and a race so bold  
That Austria, though her leagues of empire  
span

Half Europe, and her eagles east and west  
Hail Russ and Swiss, Alps and Carpathian,  
Proud Austria puts her crown of empire by  
To take this other, which adorns her best,  
This crown whose thousand years are nearly  
told,—

New empire leaning on a kingdom old,  
And Austria changed to Austria-Hungary.

Ms. A. A. Co. N. H. Nov. 27, 1912.  
34/100

## A CONFESSION.

HE.

I CANNOT trust my heart—  
It urges me against my calmer self,  
And makes me weak when I would most be  
strong.

SHE.

Is not this weakness rather some new strength  
Which, if you prize it, will sustain the old,  
And add another virtue of its own?  
Why keep your heart in bondage to your will  
When it might serve you better, being free?

HE.

Not for the love of bondage, but of freedom.  
A man must choose his course, and mine is  
fixed :  
It leads me whither few will follow me,

And ends, who knows? among the snows  
perhaps,  
In darkness, or in sorrow, or in death.

SHE.

Why these wild words, that wrong your better  
mind?  
See, you are overwrought, need rest and  
change;  
Pray let me be physician and prescribe  
For this disorder these best remedies—  
Trust me, there are no truer.

HE.

Rest, child?—well,  
If in fixed purpose and continuous work;  
But rest that only slumbers and forgets,  
Or change that flies the labour of the hour  
To hunt a shadowy morrow of delight—  
These are for dreamers. And am I a  
dreamer,  
A moulder of mere words and blower of  
bubbles,  
That you would medicine me with change and  
rest?



SHE.

Fie, Edgar, these were never thoughts of  
mine ;

I know you for no dreamer, but a man—  
No dreamer, surely, save those thoughts be  
dreams

That pass into the substance of our lives,  
And make us what we are—

HE.

Poor dreamers all !

And I a piteous dreamer with the rest.  
If to be wise be but to know oneself  
Not wise, and wisdom may consist in that,  
Then only am I wise, fair confessor.  
Pray you, confess me for the nonce—

SHE.

How so ?

Shall I accept the picture you have drawn  
As a deliberate portrait of yourself ?  
A dreamer, on your own confession, say  
you ?

HE.

Ay, it must be so. In my dreams a lover,  
And in my love a dreamer. Think not indeed  
That any man escapes the heat of youth—  
The ravishment, the sweet enthusiasm,  
The hopes, the joys, that in our budding state  
Are the fair promise that we give,—too fair  
For the pernicious chills and frosts of life ;  
And so our blossoms die, or if they live,  
Live only to a worse decay.

SHE.

Hush ! hush !

This bitterness is a blemish, I protest.  
Were you a greybeard with a gouty limb,  
Cross, old, impatient—not, as yet you are,  
Young and in blossom too—we might concede  
Somewhat to these regrets : now, pray, no  
more,  
But make confession frankly while you may.

HE.

Well, well, child, what have I confessed  
already ?

SHE.

Something to smile at:—Edgar is himself  
The dreamer he describes.

HE.

True, though Agnes smiles.  
An idle dream, a mere conceit, no more;  
But while it lasted with what joy I lived!  
I nursed the dear delusion for a year,  
Through four whole seasons that to me were  
one,  
And that one, Spring. 'Tis strange that  
Winter follows  
Before the riper seasons have bestowed  
Their flower and fruit.

SHE.

More strange, that you withhold  
The pleasant sequel to this mystery:—  
Believe me, I am curious; let me know it—  
Or shall I guess?

HE.

Guess on.

SHE.

Then I would say  
It is confessed in this—you were in love.  
I have the words, 'a lover in your dreams,  
And in your love a dreamer'; there it is—  
That which to others is devoutly real  
Was but a dream to you. Am I not right?

HE.

Right in the measure of one half the truth.  
I was in love—so far, an easy guess;  
Nay, am in love—now make the secret out:  
But love to me, trust me, is sound enough,  
Too painfully a fact to take the guise  
Of this poor dream you challenge.

SHE.

Then I yield,  
My guessing knows no likelier mark than this.

HE.

How should it? Well, I will explain myself.  
Love makes us vain; we call some object ours,  
But to have made it ours we must, forsooth,

Have clothed it with ourselves. And what  
did I

But feed the foolish humour of my heart  
With this delusion—that a simple girl,  
Weak, timid, as a simple girl must be,  
Could share with me my own hard enterprise ;  
Forego herself indeed, and be instead  
That stronger nature which I call my own,—  
Strong to resist, to bear ; unmoved alike,  
Through all the changing fashion of the time,  
Whether the breath of man's unsteadiness  
Blow hot or cold.

SHE.

Men call you proud, Edgar ;  
I call you proud and noble, brave and true.  
But pray be just to us. If we are weak  
Men make us so. Our little vanities  
Lie skin-deep only. Look right into us,  
• And you shall find the heart of woman beats  
With pulse as firm and constancy as true  
As yours or any man's. Love that is true love  
Outlasts the greenness of the evergreen :  
When once it strikes its roots into the heart

There it lives on—ay, in a woman's heart—  
Lives on though never sun may foster it,  
Nor any sweet dews freshen it, and clouds  
But rain their bitter tears upon it,—nay,  
Though it be bruised and worn by wanton feet,  
Still, like the moss that rises from the tread,  
Lives on and knows no death.

HE.

Were this not true  
I could believe it true with all my heart;  
But both must I believe and this be true.

SHE.

'Tis well, you are a convert?

HE.

Would I were!  
But there is something deeper in this matter  
Than you have found, dear Agnes. What if  
love,  
True though it be and constant, should become  
An agony, the passion of a heart  
Ill-mated and forlorn, a shivering heart,  
Downcast with all the hardships of a lot

The hardest man can choose or woman  
suffer?

And shall a woman suffer thus for me,—  
Deny herself, her nature, her true weakness,  
Her hopes, her heart, for one who hath no  
heart

To cheer her hopes? How dared I dream  
of it?

It is my destiny to walk alone :

Others have done so, nobly, why not I?

Let such as care for them take love's delights,  
I yield them freely, they were never mine ;

Labour is mine, with whom I wed, to find

A hopeful progeny in some poor souls

Raised, taught, and made to live as souls  
should live.

SHE.

Scarce may a woman's life aspire to be

So noble and heroical as yours :

Ours is the meaner, yours the greater part,

For men may choose both for themselves and  
us, .

And make and mould us to their stronger will.

Yet does the slender ivy love the oak,  
And twine her arms around him unforbidden ;  
And not less kingly is the oak that deigns  
To intermix his royal leaf with hers.

How, then, dear Edgar, steadfast like the oak,  
Shall not the tendrils of a woman's love  
Twine round you, as the ivy's tendrils twine,  
And add her beauty to your steadfastness ?  
The weakest creature, strengthened by your  
strength,

By slow degrees but surely, day by day,  
In the small measure of her faculty,  
Might grow like you, be true, and brave, and  
strong.

HE.

Would there were yet some hope ! But this  
dear hand

Which trembles like a lily in my own,  
As frail as it is lovely,—this frail hand  
Was never meant to mate itself with mine,  
Whose brown laborious hardness puts to  
shame

Its snow-white innocence ; and this dear face



Is all too delicately formed and fair  
To shed its sunshine in a poor man's home.  
No! no! I must for ever be content  
To love you as I love the stars in heaven,  
Without requital and without desire.

For you may this old world keep all its  
          charms;

A pleasant world, and better to be loved  
For ever-new delights, with newer men  
And newer customs. I must go my way.  
The world has lied to me; I will not lie  
To gain the petty praises of the world:  
But seeking nothing I might fear to lose,  
Rich in the freedom from a rich man's wants,  
I make my life a warfare, and a sign.  
If there be any virtue in my prayers  
Yours shall glide smoothly to its wished-for  
          end—

That end, sweet love, sweet peace!

SHE.

Alas for me,  
You cannot know the heart that loves you best.  
You knew me once, but I am not the same—

Then I was weak, but you have made me  
strong ;

Foolish, but you have given me wisdom ; vain,  
But you have taught me a much nobler pride.  
I did not give my heart, you made it yours ;  
Now, though you give not yours, I hold it  
mine :

What you renounce that too do I cast off ;  
What you essay that shall be mine to aid—  
So shall our souls be wedded, so our thoughts  
To the same purpose ripen, and bear fruit  
In the mixed labours of our common lives.

HE.

Agnes, dear Agnes, am I dreaming now ?  
Look up again and let me ask those tears  
If this be but another cruel dream  
That lures me to my sorrow. O bright eyes,  
I can believe if you look up and speak ;  
Look up again, dear eyes, speak yet again—  
Mine, mine, for ever mine !

SHE.

For ever yours !

## TWO MEETINGS.

### I.

Love met me on a day,  
And Love was weeping :  
'Why weep, sweet Love?' I said ;  
He drooped his golden head,  
Saying : 'For love's decay,  
For hearts that are cold and dead,  
Ill worth the keeping.'  
But while he spoke I spied  
A wicked arrow peeping  
From the quiver at his side,  
And when I stooped to kiss him,  
Before I could caress him,  
He seized the tiny dart,  
And threw it at my heart ;  
Then, like a lark in May,  
Fluttered and flew away.

## II.

Love met us on a day,  
And Love was gay:  
'Well met, sweet Love,' we said—  
He tossed his golden head  
Like a little child in play:  
He said, 'O happy day!  
For not all hearts are dead,  
Not all are old and cold;  
Smart cancels smart  
When heart to heart  
My silver chains enfold.  
I wept,' he said, 'for loves not true,  
I smile,' he said, 'for you and you'—  
Then lisping out some tender word,  
And looking up and laughing low,  
He snatched the bowstring from his bow,  
And bound us with the silver cord;  
Nor ever shall the sad fates sever  
The twain that Love made one for ever.

## IN THE TWILIGHT.

FAR off? Not far away  
Lies that fair land ;  
Shut from the curious gaze by day,  
Hidden, but close at hand :  
Let us seek it who may.

Lie by me and hold me, sweet,  
Clasp arms and sink ;  
There needs no weariness of the feet,  
Neither to toil nor think ;  
Almost the pulse may cease to beat.

Eyes made dim, and breathing low,  
Hand locked in hand,  
Goodly the visions that come and go,  
Glimpses of that land  
Fairer than the eyes can know.

Is it not a land like ours ?  
Nay, much more fair ;  
Sweeter flowers than earthly flowers  
Shed their fragrance there,  
Fade not with the passing hours.

Soft are all the airs that blow,  
Breathing of love ;  
Dreamily soft the vales below,  
The skies above,  
And all the murmuring streams that flow.

There are daughters of beauty, the host  
Of nymphs of old time ;  
All the loves of the poets who boast  
Of their loves in their rhyme,—  
Loves won, and the sadder loves lost :

Fair, passionless creatures of thought,  
Most fair, most calm ;  
The joy of whose beauty has brought  
To the soul its own balm ;  
Not desire that cometh to nought.

The dreams that were dreamed long ago  
Lie treasured there still ;  
For the things that the dreamers foreknow  
The years shall fulfil,  
The fleet years and slow.

Dreams, memories, hopes that were bright,  
And hearts that are young ;  
All the stars and the glories of night,  
All the glories of song,—  
They are there, in that land of delight.

Wilt thou seek that land then, sweet ?  
Yea, love, with thee ;  
Fleet, as thy soul's wings are fleet,  
Shall our passage be :  
Soft, on wings of noiseless beat.

Bid my wings with thine expand ;  
So may we glide  
Into the stillness of that land,  
Lovingly side by side,  
Hopefully hand in hand.

## UNDER THE MOON.

Down in the valley the fairies call  
One to another, and all in tune,  
Under the silver summer moon,  
By the silver waterfall.  
They dwell in the fairy bowers all day,  
Under the hills and far away ;  
But at night, when the moon shines round  
and clear,  
In the merriest month of the fairy year,  
They come above the ground and play—  
King and Queen, and lady and knight,  
Jester and page and minstrel gay—  
And light is the beat of their slender feet  
To the song of the minstrel, sweet, O sweet ;  
And soft is the glance, in the gleaming dance,  
Of the eyes of maidens glad and bright :  
And merrily thrown is the dark fir-cone,  
And the acorns fly from hand to hand—  
For the ringing valley is all their own,  
And theirs are the loves of Fairyland.



O to live in the fairy halls,  
And dance by the silver waterfalls,  
Dance with the fairies, dance and play,  
Under the hills and far away !  
Then with the flashing fairy train  
Merrily gambol back again,  
When the silver moon shines round and clear  
In the gladdest month of the fairy year,  
And the shrill bells ring  
In the tallest grass,  
And the minstrels sing  
As the pageants pass,  
And the merriment swells  
To the sound of the bells,  
In the mossy clefts and the open dells—  
Ever and ever a fairy bold,  
Never to die and never be old ;  
But under the sea and under the shore,  
In the shining courts of the fairy halls,  
By the crystal caves and the waterfalls,  
To live and love for evermore,—  
Far away from the night and day,  
Under the sea and under the shore,  
For ever and for evermore !

## MABEL.

### I.

LITTLE darling, Mabel mine !  
With those large bright eyes of thine,  
Looking here and looking there,  
What sweet wonders canst thou see,  
Things of mystery to me,—  
Shadowy outlines on the air,  
Moving ever far away  
From the sight that may not keep  
Clear, unto a later day,  
All the range of phantasy  
Measureless in infancy,  
More populous of images than Sleep ?

### II.

Darling mine !  
To that prattled talk of thine  
Listening, I have scarcely stirred,  
Eager for the lightest word :—

What can all its meaning be ?  
Are its great wise thoughts for me,  
Or for guardian angels fair  
Glancing round thee in the air ?

## III.

All those happy smiles of thine,  
Darling mine !  
Like the sunshine when it glows  
On a newly-budded rose ;  
Like whatever is or seems  
In the brightness of our dreams :  
Much thou lovest me, I know,  
But not all those smiles are mine ;  
Happy most if I forego  
Half thy precious bounties, given  
To thy childhood's present heaven.

## IV.

Help me, teach me, Mabel mine !  
With a simple heart like thine,  
And an eye as quick and clear,  
Heaven to me were also near :  
Then indeed I too might see  
Mysteries still unveiled to thee,  
Little queen of phantasy.

### THREE YEARS OLD.

SOFT bright eyes  
Of the sky's own blue,  
A soul like a star  
That twinkles through ;  
A dear little face  
With a dimpled chin,  
A dear little heart  
Not hard to win ;  
A tiny tongue  
That chatters all day,  
Tiny white hands  
For ever at play—  
Blithe as a fairy,  
Small and as fleet,  
True and tender,  
Loving and sweet.

Locks like the sunshine  
Crowning her head,  
Cheeks of pale peach-bloom,  
Lips rosy red;  
Soft airs about her  
Fresh as the Spring,  
Ever new fancies  
Fleet on the wing;  
Life in her laughter,  
Love in her wiles,  
Health in her gladness,  
Heaven in her smiles—  
Patiently gentle,  
Playfully wild,  
More than an angel,  
Ever a child!

## A TRIAD.

GREY large eyes that can laugh and smile,  
Blue eyes, black eyes, lovingly bent,  
Hearts still empty of worldly guile,  
Souls still full of divine content !  
Maudie, Fairy, Gipsy mine,  
Blithest hearts in the world to me,—  
Enough for you that the sun will shine,  
Whatever the ways of the world may be.

Enough for you that the birds will sing,  
And the woods and the fields and the  
streams be glad,  
Though cold days come with the fickle Spring,  
And the hearts of the weary be sad.  
Go, gather your daisies, pink and white,  
Bind them up in a daisy-chain ;  
Your only world is a world of delight,  
And never a world of pain.

## IDA.

WE loved her for her lovely face,  
Her winsome ways, her wondrous grace ;

Dear Ida !

But, all her beauty far above,  
We loved her for her heart of love :

Little Ida !

We listened for her pattering feet,  
And called her wildest prattle sweet ;

Dear Ida !

And still we listen, hearing still,  
In mellow thrush and skylark shrill,  
Her song, her laugh, her lightest trill—

Little Ida !

Old men would bless her golden head,  
And maidens kissed her roses red ;

Dear Ida !

And children, in their childish way,  
Made her the queen of all their play—  
She was of lighter heart than they:  
Little Ida!

Alas! that we can dimly know  
How God's will shall be done below;  
Dear Ida!

She walked with angels from her birth,  
And when she grew too good for earth  
She went,—and we have done with mirth:  
Little Ida!



## MAY MARION.

EYES of the softest shade of grey,  
Lips that laugh in a winsome way,  
Pink-white cheeks as merry as they,  
And a pert proud chin that seems to say  
‘You need not go, but you must not stay’—  
That’s May Marion, that’s my May.

Small white hands that hold me at bay  
Half in earnest and all in play,  
Pretty speeches that say me ‘Nay,’  
Prettier looks that all mean ‘Yea,’  
Ever, for ever, as now to-day—  
That’s May Marion, that’s my May.

## TWO LIVES.

A VIOLET opening from the bud,  
All in a little world of green ;  
    With fragrance sweet,  
    With beauty meet,  
Under its leafy screen.

The sun was high and bright and fair,  
But O the cloud that lay between !  
    A cloud that past  
    In mist at last,  
And then the light was seen.

Sweet flower that rose to meet the sun,  
Strong sun that gave it life : I ween  
    They had their hour,  
    Glad sun and flower,  
When all the world was green.

TO E. A. S.

PEN of polished gold be thine,  
Lady mine!  
Gold that gives its richer glow  
To the tempered steel below.  
Let these two thy thoughts inspire,  
Steel that comes through forge and fire,  
Gold that gilds, exalts, enhances  
Precious poems, rare romances.  
Write, O gentle lady mine,  
Golden line on golden line—  
Prose as eloquent as terse,  
Numbers sweet as Willie's verse,  
Tale and treatise, fact and fable—  
Clio's self were scarce more able.

All the Muses shall be nigh  
When thy thoughts take wing and fly;  
All fair aids the world can lend thee  
Shall await thee and attend thee;

Land and sea and moon and star,  
Things around thee and afar,  
Heart of flower and heart of man,  
These shall give thee all they can.  
Write, then, happy lady, write,  
Fill the growing hour with light ;  
Time will yield thee of its store—  
Ay, but let it owe thee more.

## A CHILD'S THOUGHT.

I LIE awake in my bed,  
When you think I am fast asleep,  
With the coverlet over my head,  
But a fold through which I can peep ;  
And I peep sometimes as I lie,  
And out through the window I see  
A little twinkling star in the sky,  
Winking and peeping at me.

A star, if you call it a star,  
For it seems no more than a spark,  
And I cannot think that it shines so far  
Through all the air and the dark ;  
But if it be what you say,  
Then would I had wings to fly—  
Perhaps I could go and come in a day,  
The nearest way through the sky.

And what if I never came back ?

Well, Heaven, you say, is up there ;  
And the nights down here are dreary and black,

While the stars are white and fair :  
And here there are tasks to be done,

And endless lessons to learn ;—  
But you sometimes would miss me for one,  
And I think I should want to return.

## A MAN'S THOUGHT.

WORK, there is work to be done,  
A whole day's work in a day ;  
From the rising sun to the setting sun,  
Work for all who may.

And the prayer of the working hand  
Is the prayer of the working head—  
The clamorous prayer of a hungry land—  
'Give us our daily bread !'

Fame, there is fame to be won,  
A name that stands for a name ;  
The prize when the race shall be run,  
And the honours a victor may claim :—

Gold, and better than gold,  
Power, and the world's goodwill ;  
And better than all, a thousandfold,  
An honest conscience still.

To suffer, and know no shame,  
To conquer, and leave no ban,  
To live as giving, through praise and blame,  
‘Assurance of a man.’



## DEATH OR LIFE ?

DEAD ! he is dead, they say :  
They darken all the house with gloom,  
And hush their steps from room to room ;  
And whisper very low,  
Lest he who sleeps should hear and know—  
Yet he is dead, they say.

Not so ! not so !  
For saw ye not, ye who beheld the close,  
His spirit triumph in the mortal throes  
Of that last overthrow ?—  
Clear, bright, rejoicing, free ;  
A glorified and blessed soul,  
Made perfect and made whole  
By that release,—  
For evermore to be,  
And be at peace !

## VOICES.

THE wind's low whisper in the grass  
And louder murmur on the air ;  
And in my heart a silent voice,  
And silent echoes there.

Could I but surely know and feel  
What precious thing the low wind saith,  
What blessed promise in my heart  
That still voice whispereth,—

Then should I no more doubt and fear,  
As those that have no living stay,  
For God's own presence, shining clear,  
Would melt these mists away.

## A BEATITUDE.

*'Blessed are they that mourn.'*

O SWEETEST words of Holy Writ,  
And dearest Son of God that spake !  
Our grief, since Thou hast looked on it,  
Is blessed for Thy sake.

We cannot help the lot that falls,  
Obedient to the perfect mind :  
We parley with the voice that calls,  
But Thou, Lord, Thou art kind !

'Twere better this or that, we say—  
To live long summers out and grow  
To ripeness, with a riper day,  
Nor fade before the snow :

Forgetful that Thy summers range  
Through other spheres and larger space  
Nor ever lapse, nor suffer change,  
Made perfect by Thy face.

Though few be all our years below  
We have a glorious hope in this—  
The steps we came, the steps we go,  
Link two eternities.

How then, if one among us pass  
Beyond the mystic veil, and win  
The crown and robe of Righteousness,  
And meet the King within ;

Shall we not count his glory gain,  
And daily in our closet pray,  
That, living not our lives in vain,  
We may go up that way ?

Poor heart of man, so brave, so weak !  
Poor stricken hearts that can but feel !  
Come, take ye blessing all who seek,  
This love is strong to heal :

No other voice is half so sweet—  
'Blessed are they that mourn,' He said :  
Lay all your sorrows at His feet,  
Stay, and 'be comforted.'

## A REMONSTRANCE.

### I.

ALAS, is the world so old?  
And is beauty withered and dead?  
And is all the story told,—  
Nothing left to be said?  
Old—the dear mother—not old!  
She is younger than ever to-day;  
Never since poet hath sung  
Was the dear old earth so young.  
Look! where the sunbeams play,  
Through the leaves, on the ground below;  
Get some of their warmth, and throw  
Their brightness into thy song—  
Let the morning breeze blow through it,  
And the morning dew bedew it—

All the true and tender voices  
Of sweet Nature that rejoices,  
Let but these give music to it,  
Laughing sun and joyous rain,  
And thou shalt not sing in vain.

## II.

Build thy watch-tower broad and high,  
Watch the days as they go by,  
Seize them singly as they fly:  
Look along from west to east,  
See the morrows ere they dawn,  
Sing of greatness to be born  
When the ages have increased:  
Poet-seër, prophet-poet,  
What thou seest, what thou hearest  
Of the world to which thou'rt nearest,  
Tell thou us, who long to know it;  
And though few there be that heed  
While thou droppest in the seed,  
When comes up the golden grain  
Thou shalt not have sung in vain.

## EVENTIDE.

SHEAVES, golden sheaves :

With eventide are few sheaves left to bind,  
And of the full ears few are left behind, —  
Few ears among the stubble and the leaves :  
Sheaves, golden sheaves.

Leaves, fallen leaves :

These are the days of lighter seasons gone,  
Fair days, that faded from me one by one,  
While yet the grain was ripening for the  
sheaves—  
Leaves, fallen leaves.

Ears, precious ears :

Fed by the summer sunshine and the rain ;  
Green ears, that ripened to the solid grain,  
Whose measure crowns the promise of the  
years—  
Ears, precious ears.

Years, solemn years :  
The harvest of a life not ill-bestowed,  
Whereof the sower reaps as he hath sowed,  
With tears for gladness, and for sorrow tears—  
Years, solemn years.



## NATHAN.

*(To Professor Edward Dowden.)*

A PLEASANT story of the days of old,—  
By gossips first and garrulous elders told  
Among the fathers of the Genoese,  
Old men grown grey with many memories ;  
A fragment of the unforgotten lore  
Of lands far off, and many a sea-beat shore,  
Where, in their days of youth and hardihood,  
They touched and tarried ever as they would,  
And bartered of their wine, and oil, and spice,  
For gold, and precious stones, and things of  
price.

But sweetly comes the story down to us  
From eloquent Boccaccio, amorous ;  
Told by fond lips to many a flashing eye  
Under the cloudless sky of Italy,  
Beside a fountain, dropping dews divine,  
In those old gardens of the Florentine.

In a fair land that lieth to the east  
An aged man with well-won wealth increased ;  
To east and west for many a furlong lay  
His wide demesnes, made wider day by day,  
And gold and silver, drifting in like snow,  
Filled all his coffers to their overflow.  
A man of gentle heart and gracious worth  
His fame was like a fragrance on the earth,  
So generously he helped his fellow men,  
And sought no sordid recompense again,  
Contented if, for all his service done,  
The love of some true hearts at length he won.  
Upon the fading chronicles of fame  
His memory lingers by no other name  
Than Nathan ; but his goodness will not cease  
To shed its softening warmth as years increase,  
And heal the hollow feuds of rich and poor, —  
A blessing and a balm for evermore.

Under his spreading olive trees at eve  
He loved to sit, and watch the shadows weave  
Their lengthening chequered scrolls upon the  
grass,  
And, overhead, the slow white vapours pass ;

Or listen to the murmur of the breeze  
That stirred the faintest ripples in the trees,  
But took its little breath of being there  
Only to die away upon the air.  
And so upon a day, at eventide,  
He lingered till the mingled shadows died  
Into the broader shadow of the night ;  
And silently, with deepening radiance white,  
The moonlight made the lovely night less dim,  
And all the myriad stars shone down on him.  
Then, in sweet silence, thoughtful and apart,  
The good man held communion with his  
heart :—

‘Lo, of the years accorded unto men,  
My years are more than threescore years and  
ten,  
And all the blessings of prosperity  
The loving God hath multiplied to me.  
Wifeless, and lacking children for my heirs,  
My brethren are my true inheritors ;  
My brethren, for the old and lame and poor  
Who wander helplessly from door to door,  
And have no refuge or abiding-place,  
All these are of my kindred and my race

And since on me God's gracious favours fall,  
And I have substance large enough for all,  
Surely it is but well that I should give  
Freely to these, that they may eat and live,—  
To these my brethren, be they good or bad,  
The wherewithal to raise and make them  
glad.'

And then and often as the swift days ran  
He pondered in his mind a goodly plan,  
How he should help the suffering in their need,  
And raise the fallen, and the hungry feed.  
And thus he purposed, pondering many  
days—

A house of spacious magnitude to raise,  
Foursquare, and fronting to four various ways ;  
With twice four open gateways on each side,  
And all within large courts and chambers wide,  
And in the courts cool fountains that should  
slake

The tongue that burns, or heal the limbs  
that ache ;

And in the chambers couches whose soft bed  
Should give repose to the most wearied head ;

And fragrant airs to fan regrets away,  
And soothe the sorrowful till another day.  
But not alone to succour the distressed,  
Or help the weak, or give the weary rest,  
Did Nathan purpose—his benevolent plan  
Took heed of all the many needs of man;  
But chiefly sought to lighten and unbind  
The fetters that make dark the darkened mind,  
To raise the soul to all its proper height,  
And give the groping spirit light, more light.  
So he designed high halls and galleries fair,  
And in his heart resolved to gather there  
The wisdom of all ages and all lands—  
Books, records, charts—the works of cunning  
hands—

And all inventions that by science won,  
By science fostered, help her progress on :  
Paintings and sculptures, and the marvels  
wrought

By poet's fancy and by artist's thought,—  
These, and whatever else had any worth  
In all the far-off cities of the earth,  
Nathan would gather, till his halls should be  
The seat of science and philosophy;

At once the school, the treasury, and the throne  
Of all the arts mankind had ever known.

Promptly, as one who does not only dream,  
He carried into act the generous scheme,  
And marble walls and polished columns rise  
Like a vast Pantheon beneath the skies.

Workers in iron, and in brass and gold,  
And craftsmen in all arts, both new and old,  
Wrought without ceasing, and their work  
was good ;

And like a flower that opens from the bud  
The building grew—from tessellated floors  
To sculptured wainscots and to carven doors ;  
From walls whose frescoed panels breathe  
and live

With all the life immortal art could give,  
To gilded roofs and luminous domes on high,  
And brighter minarets flashing to the sky.  
And Nathan with a good man's joy beheld  
The work accomplished, and his dream fulfilled ;

For while the structure rose at his command,  
From all the busy marts of every land,

By love bestowed, with loving ardour bought,  
Were gathered all the treasures that he sought :  
And now, in its capaciousness complete,  
Furnished, and filled, and made in all things  
meet

For those high ends for which it was begun,  
The house was builded, and the work was  
done.

As to a shrine, came pilgrims from afar,  
Drawn by the brilliance of this eastern star,  
To gaze on Nathan's palace, and to see  
The marvels of his hospitality ;  
Nor but to see, for whosoever came  
Found Nathan's goodness greater than his  
fame.

The wanderer, who sought a little rest,  
Delayed his going and remained a guest ;  
The guest, rejoicing in a host so rare,  
Was fain to find a home for ever there.  
An equal welcome met at every door  
The wise and simple, and the rich and poor ;  
And simple men grew wise, and wise men drew  
From old-world wonders wisdom ever new.

The rich, if in the pride of wealth they came,  
Deeming their showy opulence the same  
As Nathan's, when they saw his ampler state,  
And his humility like his riches great,  
Were humbled, and in lowliness made bold  
Renounced the silly vanity of gold.  
The poor were fed, the needy were made glad,  
The naked clothed, and not a heart was sad,  
But like sweet music, or a sweeter song  
Which added voices deepen and prolong,  
Perpetual offerings of thanks ascend  
From hearts long friendless that have found  
a friend.

But in a neighbouring land a rich man dwelt  
Who loved his riches—him no tear would melt,  
No sorrow move; yet, to exalt his pride,  
He scattered golden favours far and wide:  
That which for pity he would not bestow  
He gave with ostentation, and for show,  
Hoping to dazzle with profuse expense,  
And charm the world with his magnificence.  
He, Mithridanes, when he heard the fame  
Of Nathan, and no name but Nathan's name



Spoken among the people of his land,  
Was wroth with envy; and his heart and hand  
Burned to resent the glory that made dim  
The little glory that belonged to him.

‘What, are his riches so much more than  
mine,

That he should be accounted half divine?  
Time was when every beggar at my gate  
Cringed to me like a dog, and called me great;  
But now, if any beggar deigns to ask  
My charity, he is in haste to bask  
In Nathan’s smile, and while he eats my  
bread,

Extols the princely Nathan in my stead.  
Princely! because the dotard loves to see  
A crowd of paupers gather at his knee,  
And makes his so-called palace but a place  
Of refuge, for the waifs of every race.  
But I will build a palace which shall be,  
To Nathan’s, as myself to such as he;  
My courts more ample, and my prouder halls,  
Shall shame the narrow compass of his walls,  
And on my gates shall scroll and shield attest  
My wealth the greater, and my rank the best.

So, let the doting Nathan while he may  
Take heed, for though men talk of him to-day,  
Ere many days he shall be no more known,  
And I shall reign unrivalled and alone.'

And Mithridanes in his turn essays,  
With craftsmen and artificers, to raise  
A palace; and with almost magic speed,  
Not like a flower expanding but a weed,  
His palace rose and grew, until at last,  
Bolder than Nathan's, lordlier and more vast,  
It too was finished; and the trumpets told  
The sum of all its costliness in gold.  
Brilliant with spangles, glowing with veneers,  
But empty of that harvest of the years,  
The garnered wealth and wisdom of the earth  
Which gave to Nathan's halls their rarest  
worth,—

It was a lordly palace, and no more:  
And all in vain the scrolls on every door  
Witnessed to Mithridanes' rank and state,  
Great ostentation could not make him great.

He sat within his halls, and saw with pride  
The gilt and glitter which on every side

Flashed with mere newness ; and awaiting  
there

The rich man's deference and the poor man's  
prayer,

He deemed that these, beholding that display,  
Would feed him with fresh flatteries day by  
day,

Each for his own behoof, but each with each  
Vying in the soft incense of his speech.

But first to enter at the foremost gate

Was a poor woman, all disconsolate ;

She in her sorrow looked upon the ground,

Not heeding the magnificence around,

And took the gift he gave her, and went back ;

But still, as something yet she seemed to  
lack,

Returned through other gates, and spoke no  
word,

Taking the charity his hand conferred,

Until, in anger, Mithridanes cried

'Thou beggar, art thou yet not satisfied ?

I cannot waste upon so mean a slave

The wealth with which I purchase what I  
crave,—

Not thy poor thanks, that were too small  
a care,  
But the applause of all men everywhere.  
Begone !'

She answered, turning at the word,  
'I thought to find in thee another lord  
Like Nathan. Through his two and thirty  
gates,

Where not a piteous suppliant awaits  
Unheard, I entered, and from Nathan's hand  
Received of the good things that fill his  
land.

Thirty and two fair boons he gave to me,  
And spake me tender words in charity,  
Nor, though from morn till night I went and  
came,

My need and supplication still the same,  
Did he grow weary, but when last I went  
He blest me, and I came away content.  
Here, though but twelve times I have asked  
of thee,

Thou gavest little, and thou spurnest me :  
Be wise, I pray thee, for thy pride must fall—  
Nathan is great and generous above all.'

Bitter those words, and bitterly in his heart  
They rankled, with a keen and crushing smart.  
An hour ago he cherished the conceit  
That all men should do homage at his feet,  
And now the pomp he prized, the gorgeous show  
That made him glorious but an hour ago,  
Glared with a cruel brightness in his face,—  
The taunt of failure, omen of disgrace.  
Vain for its ends was all that vast expense,  
Vain, all in vain, that mere magnificence ;  
His wealth, devoted only to display,  
No thanks compelled, and charmed no tears  
    away,—  
For ends like these too lavish or too small :  
Greater was Nathan still, and generous above all.

‘So am I foiled’—thus to himself he spake—  
‘This beggar, though my gifts she deigns to  
    take,  
Scorns them and me, and raves of Nathan still,  
As though the world were his to work his will.  
But not for this I made these halls to shine,  
And called them, and the lands about them,  
    mine,

And spent my wealth, and from my lofty place  
Stooped to receive a miserable race :  
Not for this surely did I cast aside  
The calm and high seclusion of my pride,  
And vex my ears, not so assailed till then,  
With all the petty woes of feeble men.  
But I will hear no more this hated cry  
Of "Nathan," and still "Nathan": he shall  
die!

And since old age enfeebles him in vain,  
And spares his body while it smites his brain,  
I will avenge my wrongs with my own hand,  
And of his name and presence rid the land.'

Thereafter he set out, and took with him  
Two trusty men, grim-visaged, broad of limb.  
Well-horsed they rode, scarce halting night or  
day,

Till the third morning beamed upon their way,  
When far before them, rosy-hued and white,  
Nathan's high towers flashed back the golden  
light.

Then Mithridanes bade his minions wait  
In hiding, till the day grew dim and late,

But he, with his dark thoughts and plotting  
sin,

Crept to the palace gates and entered in.  
Avoiding with ill grace the welcome there,  
The eyes that laughed, the lips that spake  
him fair,

He turned aside, and following where there led  
A path made dim by arching boughs o'erhead,  
Came soon upon a place of pleasant shade,  
A lawn, where cedars grew and fountains  
played.

Here, as his wont was in the morning heat,  
Nathan reposed, alone in his retreat ;  
And Mithridanes, seeing him ill-clad  
And old, and with a countenance half-sad,  
Deemed him an ancient servant of the place,  
Helpless, or very poor, or in disgrace.  
Wherefore he spoke to him without re-  
straint—

‘My friend, you seem to have grown old and  
faint

In Nathan’s service, yet, if one may guess,  
Your wage were greater had you served him  
less.’

And Nathan, conscious of the stranger's mood,  
Made answer, 'Yes, these people call him  
good,

But I, the oldest here, who know him well,  
Know little good of him, and nought to tell.'  
To whom the other, with a prompt assent,  
'And yet you serve him, yet you are content  
To pine in indigence, while an idle race,  
Who sound his odious praise from place to  
place,

Live on the lavish bounty he bestows,—  
Lavish in waste, withholding where he owes?'  
'Well, well,' said Nathan, 'I am old and weak,  
Let them take all, I neither take nor seek.  
But here, in this dim path, you miss your way,  
There is the house, pray enter and be gay:  
I will go in with you, and you shall see  
This Nathan, of what manner of man he be.'  
'Tis well, your goodness furthers my design,  
For as your thoughts are of him, so are mine;  
Lead and I follow, and you too shall see  
This Nathan, how he yet shall answer me.'  
And Nathan went before, and with a word  
Checked the salute that had betrayed him lord.



Feigning his steward's place, he led the guest  
To a fair chamber, meet for midday rest ;  
But Mithridanes cared not for repose—  
Meats, wines, were offered to him, but of those  
Nought would he take, for all his thoughts  
were bent,

All his desires, upon one dark intent.

'Thou sayest then, old man, he treats thee  
ill ?'

'Truly, he does, and I remain here still  
Only because I am too old to go :  
You, when you know him——'

'All there is to know  
I know already : listen, friend, to me,  
This Nathan is my one sworn enemy ;  
And since he loves you not, but gives you  
shame,

Your anger and my hate should be the same.  
Were it not well before another day  
To end our wrongs, and put him right  
away?—

How say you ?'

'How shall I gainsay a knight  
Of so much courage ? It is surely right

To help the injured and the strong defy:

He is your enemy—then let him die.'

'But how and where?'

'He rises with the sun,  
And walks, before the day has well begun,  
In yonder grove, unarmed and all alone;  
There may you slay him, and escape unknown.'

'Most excellent old man, I ask no more;  
Your meed shall be your freedom, for before  
Another day's harsh service fret your feet  
Nathan shall perish, and the world be sweet.'

And ere the day broke, while the ways  
were dim,

Crept Mithridanes and those twain with him  
Into the dusky alleys of the wood;  
And where a thicket of dark cypress stood,  
Hard by the path that led from Nathan's gate,  
Hid, all apart, his coming to await.  
Slowly the twilight from a sombre grey  
Changed all to yellow, and at length the day  
Glowed on the tree-tops, while the boughs  
around

With sudden breadths of shadow flecked the  
ground.

A soft, slow step, scarce heard upon the  
grass,—

And Mithridanes saw an old man pass,  
Feeble, and worn, and drooping; but whose  
mien

Betokened with scant strength a mind serene.  
And straightway from his ambush hastening  
out

He stopped the wanderer with a churlish  
shout—

‘Old dotard! be thy sins upon thy head,  
Thy time has come to slumber with the dead;  
Take thus thy doom’—and while he spoke  
the word,

He drew and held aloft his murderous sword.  
But Nathan answered calmly, without fear,  
‘Do what thou wilt, thy wish commands me  
here:

If aught of mine, though it should be my life,  
Shall profit thee, pray take it without strife;  
Whatever men have asked of me I gave,  
And what thou askest thou shalt surely have.’

And Mithridanes, when he heard the voice  
That yesterday had made him to rejoice,  
Counselling Nathan's death ; and saw the face  
That looked with favour on his ends so base ;  
And knew that Nathan, loyal to his word,  
Consented now to perish by his sword,  
Was smitten with remorse for all his sin,—  
And, glad to fail where he had hoped to win,  
Fell before Nathan, and on bended knees  
Besought him in these words, or like to these :  
' My father, I was envious of thy fame,  
And eager that my own unworthy name  
Should rank with thine, or higher, but there  
stood  
Thy worth against me, for men called thee  
good.

In vain with lavish gifts of gold and store  
I sought to rival thee : thy gifts the more,  
With all the love with which thou only gave,  
Made each a friend whom I had made a slave.  
Then, with a devilish jealousy possessed,  
I craved thy life, and gave myself no rest  
Till I should blot thee out, and in thy stead  
Receive the blessings poured upon thy head.



## CONSTANCE.

*' Only a tale of love is mine,  
A tale of the Decameron, told  
In Palmieri's garden old.'*

### I.

A TALE of love, a tale of bitterness,  
Such as a little widowed bird might sing,  
Far from a friendly nest, companionless,  
And fluttering weakly on a feeble wing;  
But love is sweet, and sweet is sorrowing,  
When sorrow lives with love and takes  
its voice;  
For like a mingled cadence on one string,  
That makes us sad or moves us to rejoice,  
Love only laughs or weeps and hath no  
other choice.

## II.

At Lipari, long years and years ago,  
When the warm summer of Sicilian skies  
Made the rough island like a garden glow,  
Martuccio, basking in the light that lies  
In eyes that answer to beseeching eyes,  
Loved Constance, and her only, lived for  
her ;  
And she, made happy by so brave a prize,  
Loved him, and lived for him, and all the air  
Was sweeter for their love, and all the land  
more fair.

## III.

They met by stealth, as lovers often do,  
Not in the daytime and the public way,  
But when the dim hours on to darkness  
drew,  
And where there lurked no loiterers to  
betray ;  
For though full many a listener had they  
To love's soft pleading and its simple lore,  
Yet were these but the winds and waves,  
at play

Among the sheltered windings of the shore,  
Whither the lovers strayed to tell their true  
love o'er.

IV.

Under the stillness of the starry skies,  
Stillness scarce broken by the sounding sea,  
Or by the fluttering wings of winds that rise  
Almost in silence, sinking silently,  
They saw bright visions of the days to be,  
And dreamed again those dreams that never  
tire,—  
Dreams in whose unsubstantial imagery  
The fair world broadens, and the skies  
aspire,  
But to give love its own, and youth its own  
desire.

V.

Dreams destined soon to fade and pass away,  
For when Martuccio craved the maiden's  
hand,  
Urging a simple suit, as true love may,  
Which asking much bears yet a meek  
demand,



Her sire repulsed him,—pitiless while he  
scanned  
His narrow fortunes and his low degree ;  
For lacking name and fame, and gold and  
land,  
How should he hope to win, or such as he,  
The one fair flower of all an old nobility ?

## VI.

Martuccio, smarting from the proud man's  
scorn,  
Craved then the boon no longer, but instead  
Nursed a bold project for the morrow-  
morn,  
And vowed within his heart to win and  
wed ;  
And scarcely had the next eve's moon  
o'erhead  
Unveiled her virgin whiteness to the night,  
Ere, with a few brave comrades whom he  
led,  
He had equipped a little ship for flight,  
Bent upon wealth and fame, and conquest  
and delight.

VII.

Then came the parting, O most sad, most  
sweet !  
Sad tears, and sweet embraces, and sore  
pain,—  
And fears, her fears, that they might no more  
meet,  
His hopes that he might clasp her soon  
again ;  
Farewells in sighs, or spoken but in vain,  
For still he lingered, still she held him near,  
Nor could he yet resist so fond a chain ;  
But all his heart grew eloquent to her ear  
With whispers and soft speech, love's own  
familiar cheer.

VIII.

'Great prizes may be won by those who  
dare,  
And precious are the toils I brave for thee ;  
Prickly the thorns, the nestling rose how fair,  
These are the thorns, thou art the rose for  
me !'—  
So he dispelled her fears, and tenderly

Smoothed the rough promise of the coming  
days ;  
And she was comforted, and seemed to see  
A happy ending to the perilous ways  
Where love should follow fame, and fame be  
crowned with praise.

## IX.

Alas, that dearest joys must have an end,  
And hearts that make a summer when they  
meet  
Their summer pleasures ere they part must  
spend,  
And parting face the coldest winds that  
beat !  
The lovers, sorrowing still for love's defeat,  
And fearing sadder heart-ache on the  
morrow,  
Drank deeply while the brimming cup was  
sweet—  
From these delights, too fleeting, must they  
borrow  
Through many days a charm to help them  
from their sorrow.

X.

Beguiling the short hours with happy  
 dreams,  
 They knew not that the night had waned  
 away,  
 Though in the east the morning's early beams  
 Foretold the fuller coming of the day :  
 So long delaying he would still delay ;  
 But fate is cruel, fortune all unkind,  
 And now he may but sigh farewell, and  
 pray  
 Heaven's blessing on the darling left  
 behind,  
 And for himself, alas, fleet sails and flying  
 wind.

XI.

O many tears the gentle maiden shed,  
 And many sighs her tender bosom wrung,  
 And many days and weeks she hung her  
 head,  
 And pale and weary she became ere long,—  
 Pale with much weeping, weary of lute and  
 song,

Weary of all things joyous, all things fair ;  
And bitterly she cried to heaven, or clung  
To hopes that failed her, fruitless as  
despair,  
While ever in her heart grew love with love's  
sad care.

## XII.

'Ah me ! ah me !' she murmured to the  
brooks,  
Choosing the paths they twain had found  
before ;  
'Ah me ! ah me !' and on the ground she  
looks,  
For all the sky is dark for evermore :  
'Ah me, sweet angels, my lost love restore !'  
And in scarce other accents would she  
pray,  
But this sad strain, 'Ah me !' still o'er  
and o'er  
She murmured to the brooks both night  
and day,  
Glad only in the dreams that chased her  
gloom away.

XIII.

For in her dreams Martuccio's constant face  
 Bent o'er her with its wonted tenderness,  
 And ever then from distant place to place  
 She followed him, and made her sighing  
     less ;  
 For dreaming of his ventures and success  
 She saw the time of sweet attainment near :  
 But when she woke up to her old distress,  
 Then sadly, like a tolling bell to hear,  
 She murmured still, 'Ah me ! ah me !' with  
     many a tear.

XIV.

O Love, dear Love, the dearest bliss of all !  
 O Love, dread Love, the sharpest misery !  
 What gifts are these that on thy altars fall,—  
 What incense rises sad and solemnly ?  
 Tears that have blinded many a beaming  
     eye,  
 Sighs that have wrought in all the world  
     much pain,  
 Blooms early withered, and bright hopes that  
     die—

Yet mortal hearts are glad to feel thy chain,  
And wounded still endure, and breaking ne'er  
complain.

## xv.

When many days were gone, and in the  
land  
The singing of sweet birds again began,  
There came from swelling sea and far-off  
strand  
News of that daring ship, a whole sea's span;  
Good news, that cheered the hearts of maid  
and man,  
But most of all her sorrowing heart forlorn,  
Who listened to the telling, and outran  
The happy teller in her joy new-born,—  
Joyous from morn till night, from night  
again till morn.

## xvi.

For now she caught the gladness of the  
Spring,  
And sang full blithely to the brooks and  
vales;  
And any bird that heard might rest on wing

For sweeter music than the nightingale's :  
 Good news received, still better news she  
     hails,  
 And of her hopes makes many a favouring  
     breeze  
 To cheer her lover, and to fill his sails,  
 And bring him homeward into gentle seas,  
 With prizes won, and hopes assured, and heart  
     at ease.

XVII.

O cruel love, that gives and takes again !  
 For in a little while new tidings came,  
 And now the rumour ran that he was slain  
 Far in mid-ocean, in his fight for fame ;  
 And Constance heard again her lover's name,  
 But breathed in death-like whispers sad and  
     slow,  
 And all the truth flashed on her like a flame  
 That striketh suddenly and layeth low—  
 So stricken was her heart with added woe to  
     woe.

XVIII.

Yes, so was torn again that maiden's heart  
 With heavier sorrow and worse agony,—



Torn ere its early wounds and that first smart  
Had passed into a painless memory.  
O maidens mourning for true loves that die,  
O maidens sorrowing for false loves gone,  
Take heart anew, take comfort while you  
sigh,  
For though your many sorrows were made  
one  
Worse sorrow yet was hers, and worse than  
hers was none !

## XIX.

Friends tended her, sad friends disconsolate,  
While often her poor pulse would nearly  
cease ;  
And some whose grief was sorest for her  
fate  
Almost besought that she might be at peace ;  
To sleep, and pass away, and find release  
From tears and trouble in a land of rest,  
That were a boon to crave on bended knees  
For one so desolate and all distrest :  
But suffering as she lived God's blessing made  
her blest.

XX.

The tide of life moved feebly to and fro,  
 Unseen, unfelt, as in a waveless sea ;  
 And on her sunken cheeks and on her  
     brow  
 The pale death-chill already seemed to be ;  
 While in the pauses of her agony  
 She seemed to speak with angels round her  
     bed,  
 As though her bonds were loosed, and she  
     was free,  
 Nor evermore on earth sad tears might  
     shed,—  
 An angel even now, with angels at her head.

XXI.

But she recovered slowly, and could move  
 Unaided to behold the summer sun,  
 Though all her thoughts were dark, for that  
     great love  
 By its great loss so cruelly undone :  
 She wished for death, nor feared to look  
     upon

His frightful face in fancies all the day ;  
Not now albeit, as in the summers gone,  
A cruel death, but welcome as the May  
To other hearts than hers, who sighed to go  
away.

## XXII.

She prayed for death, and to that mood  
resigned,  
But for her gentle heart and tender love—  
So dark a thought had grown within her  
mind -  
To violent end her own desires might move ;  
And day by day with downcast eyes she  
strove  
To find some easy unoffending way  
That stricken hearts in pity might approve ;  
And having found it did not wish to stay,  
But seeking her lost love would follow death  
that day.

## XXIII.

And in the quiet midnight, all alone,  
From street to street with listening step  
she crept ;

And ever, when before her feet was thrown  
 Her shadow, she was filled with dread and  
     wept :  
 Deep-cherished in her heart of hearts she  
     kept  
 Her secret ; but along that lonely way  
 The silent summits of the hills that slept  
 Seemed each to each her secret to betray,  
 And star to star gave up what in her bosom  
     lay.

XXIV.

Withal was the poor maiden so beset  
 That every little gust of wind that blew  
 Shrieked in her ear a doleful shriek, while  
     yet  
 Her purpose held to do, or not to do ;  
 But nearer to the harbour-head she drew,  
 And, underneath, the lapping waters made  
 A sound that seemed her timid feet to woo ;  
 And now she hurried on, and now she  
     stayed—  
 But still the low waves called, and bravely  
     she obeyed.

## XXV.

Over the slippery shingle did she glide,  
Down to the mark where wave and shingle  
meet ;  
There, fearless of the ocean dark and wide,  
She took a boat, with oars and sails complete,  
And, praying low, stept in with willing feet ;  
Then, having rowed a little way to sea,  
Cast oars and rudder from her, to entreat  
The cruel deep her timely grave to be,  
The unrelenting waves to end her misery.

## XXVI.

She drew a sombre mantle o'er her head,  
And lay down weeping in the lonely boat ;  
And all her thoughts were of Martuccio  
dead,  
Whom ere long she should meet in worlds  
remote ;  
'For left at mercy of the waves, afloat  
Upon the windy sea, and far from shore,  
I shall be free from sorrow soon,' she  
thought,

‘And find my love, and never lose him  
more’—

But all amidst the waves the little boat upbore.

XXVII.

Then from the north blew out a sudden wind  
That swept the waves and drove the frail  
boat on,

The ocean dark before it, and behind  
Thick darkness over all, while land was  
none.

All night the little craft, its rudder gone,  
All day, to the far southward drifted free ;  
But when again the twilight gathered down  
It struck upon the coast of Barbary,  
Where hardy seamen lived in hearing of the  
sea.

XXVIII.

And as it chanced, an aged woman there,  
Who dwelt with certain toilers of the place,  
Saw, where upon the beach her nets lay  
bare,

The little helpless boat ride in apace,  
Oarless and rudderless, in evil case,

And not a soul within to row or steer :—  
She, dreading she should miss some cherished  
face,  
Ran timidly to the spot, and drawing  
near,  
Shrank back from the sad sight that filled  
her heart with fear.

## XXIX.

For all unconscious in the wet boat lay  
Poor Constance, like a piteous creature dead,  
Her face as white as death, and drenched  
with spray  
The hair that clung and clotted round her  
head ;  
Stark were her limbs, her clothes through  
every shred  
Sodden with water, stiff from wind and  
cold,—  
Like a sweet flower when all its bloom is  
shed,  
A gentle creature grievous to behold :  
But rescuing arms of love the prostrate maid  
enfold.

xxx. ,

With all a loving mother's gentleness  
 The aged woman raised her to her knee,  
 Smoothed back her clotted hair in one long  
 tress,  
 Chafed her cold limbs, and swathed them  
 tenderly ;  
 And therewithal with many a kiss did she  
 Bring back faint colour to the faded cheek,  
 Rejoiced when very low, but audibly,  
 The maiden breathed, breathed low and  
 tried to speak,  
 Opening sad eyes that wept, most mournful  
 and most meek.

xxxI.

Sadly she wept, O piteously made moan !  
 Seeing that she was brought again to shore ;  
 Nor longer lay on the wide sea alone,  
 Nor to the land was lost for evermore :  
 And when the woman would have won her  
 o'er  
 With loving words and kind, she did but cry  
 More bitterly, for then her olden sore



Was deepened, as she deemed her friends  
were nigh,  
And that the faithless sea had cast her back  
to die.

## XXXII.

Thereat she chided all the cruel sea  
That set at nought her sorrow and her  
prayer ;  
And only by degrees, and doubtfully,  
She knew the land was strange, and strange  
to her  
The woman who took pity on her there ;  
But, knowing this, she tried to stay her tears,  
And thanked the gentle woman for her care,  
Who begged her, with compassion for her  
years,  
To dwell with her awhile till better boon  
appears.

## XXXIII.

And after much entreaty did she go,  
Half-gladly, to the woman's dwelling nigh ;  
And there did eat and stay, until her woe  
Came back again in many a swelling sigh,

And yet again she wept, and longed to die ;  
 But the poor fisherwoman, when she knew  
 Her hopeless love and utter misery,  
 Led her unto a lady, good and true,  
 Whose love was like the sun, whose pity  
 like the dew.

XXXIV.

And in her hearing, mixed with many sighs,  
 The maiden told her troubled tale again ;  
 At which was sorrow in the lady's eyes,  
 And in her heart deep pity and much pain ;  
 And thus she spoke, through tears that fell  
 like rain,  
 ' My daughter, if my daughter you will be,  
 I do beseech you here with me remain,  
 And I will love you, and for love of me  
 You shall forget to sigh, or sigh not to be free.'

XXXV.

Not deeming that she ever might forget,  
 The sorrowing maid was moved by love so  
 sweet ;  
 And on the lady's heart her heart was set,

Wherefore the lady did not long entreat :  
And underneath her roof, with labours meet,  
Small labours of the needle and the wheel,  
She dwelt content, and found the days  
were fleet,  
And that, though nevermore her wound  
might heal,  
There yet was peace for her, and joy that  
she could feel.

## XXXVI.

Peace and pure joy erelong the maiden felt,  
Though ever in her heart love held its place,  
For patiently to heaven had she knelt,  
And gathered strength again in God's sweet  
grace :  
A star-like brightness lighted up her face,  
And with such gladness as she used to  
sing  
She sang again, nor wept for any space,  
But like a little bird of tender wing  
Kept light a guileless heart, content with  
everything.

XXXVII.

In Lipari quite given up for lost,  
 So she abode in safety and in peace.—  
 Martuccio, cruising on the Barbary coast,  
 Prospered, and found his worldly goods  
     increase ;  
 But still unwilling that his toil should cease,  
 And eager yet for fortune and acclaim,  
 He put out boldly into broader seas,  
 And chased and captured wheresoe'er he  
     came  
 Large craft and small, whereby he grew in  
     wealth and fame.

XXXVIII.

But as it chanced, when he was well-nigh tired,  
 And thought of setting sails for home again,  
 And looked to win the prize he had desired,  
 There met him in the hollow of the main  
 A company of Saracens, seeking gain,  
 With whom he fought,— he and his com-  
     rades well ;  
 But him they seized, and all the rest  
     were slain,

Or only one of all escaped to tell  
How cruel was the fight, and what sad end  
befell.

## XXXIX.

The Saracens to Tunis bore away  
Their prisoner and their spoil, and landing  
there  
Cast him into a prison, where he lay  
In miserable bonds most hard to bear ;  
For so was he shut in from all things fair,  
Nor saw he the clear sky by day or night,  
Nor any face that lightened his despair,  
Nor heard he any voice of old delight,  
But all alone he lay, despoiled of all his right.

## XL.

There, while the rumour ran that he was slain,  
And friends and comrades wept for him,  
and she,  
His own true love, was prone to share his  
pain,  
And die with him upon the dreadful sea,  
He pined in bonds, and languished to be  
free,—

Remembering all the gladness of those days  
 When he was nigh to win her worthily,  
 With all fair honour and with all men's  
     praise,  
 Before that evil fell in the sea's perilous ways.

XL I.

But while he pined and sickened, in that  
     land  
 A war broke out—what boots it how or  
     when?—  
 And there was lifted many a foeman's hand,  
 And there were gathered many fighting men  
 To vex the kingdom, and to build again  
 Its broken fortunes with another king ;  
 And bitter was the strife that followed then,  
 Nor was the throne secure, nor anything,  
 Because of all the ill an evil war may bring.

XL II.

And hearing all in duress as he lay  
 Dark tidings of the darker strife without,  
 Martuccio cast about by night and day  
 For some device to put the foe to rout ;

And with such cunning did he cast about  
That presently he lighted on a plan,  
Of the success of which he did not doubt,  
Were it committed to some wary man,  
And fairly put to proof while high the tumult  
ran.

## XLIII.

And of his gaolers, and through them again  
Of the great lords, with much importuning,  
He craved his freedom, craving long in vain,  
And to be brought moreover to the king,  
That he might tell the purport of that thing,  
And show how best to drive the foe away—  
Whereof when the king heard he bade  
them bring  
Straightway the prisoner forth; and then  
did they  
Unbind and carry him before the king straight-  
way.

## XLIV.

Obeisance low full loyally he made,  
As well became his very low degree,

And cunningly he spake, and thus he said—  
 ‘My lord, the weapons of your enemy  
 Are arrows like your own, fleet-winged and  
 free ;  
 And when, full oft, his arrows are all gone  
 He shoots back yours, you his as craftily—  
 If, then, of all your arrows there were none  
 His bowstrings could return, the victory should  
 be won.’

XLV.

Thereat the king, ‘Forsooth, thy word is  
 true—  
 Say on’: he then, unfolding all his mind,  
 ‘Let all your archers’ bows be strung anew  
 With cords of silk, the finest of their kind,  
 And all their arrows finely notched to bind  
 These cords alone : so shall you foil the foe,  
 Whose bowstrings are of many cords en-  
 twined ;  
 For yet his arrows will your bowstrings  
 throw,  
 And these, no longer his, shall deal him  
 death and woe.’



## XLVI.

Out spake the king and bade those things  
be done,

Even as Martuccio counselled ; and him then  
He clothed in purple raiment, finely spun,  
And bade that he be honoured among  
men :—

And so the strife was stayed,—for when  
again

The bowmen met in battle face to face,  
Like a foiled tiger driven to his den

The foe was routed in a little space ;  
And through the land thenceforth went peace  
with smiling face.

## XLVII.

O sweetly then was sung Martuccio's praise  
Who late, so very late, was praised of none ;  
And fortune smiled on him in many ways  
On whom for weary months she had not  
shone ;

And the fair history of that prowess done  
In many a glowing manuscript was writ,  
With all the noble honours that he won,—

Embellished and emblazoned, as was fit,  
With many a flowery stroke of the poor  
writer's wit.

XLVIII.

All which fair fame in flying waifs of song  
Made way to Susa, as the Spring makes  
way,  
Upon the gentle breezes borne along,  
How starting into life no man can say ;  
And Constance, who had dwelt there till  
that day,  
Heard with much wonder now what tidings  
fell—  
With much delight—though yet she needs  
must pray  
That these indeed be living lips that tell  
In truth a living joy, to ears that bear no spell.

XLIX.

Scarce knowing how she moved, on wings  
or feet,  
She caught the floating rumours from the air,  
And wove them all into a story sweet,

o

Whereof the truth was then most true to  
her ;  
And losing all her will to linger there  
She told her longings to that gentle dame,  
Who shared her joy, as theretofore her  
care,  
And urged, as did her own glad heart the  
same,  
That they should straight go forth and find  
him in his fame.

## L.

Forth then to Tunis full of hope they bent,  
With them the fisherwoman, glad as they,  
And asking eager questions as they went  
Heard but his praise in answer all the  
way ;  
But coming to the place at close of day  
They rested for the night, as seemed most  
meet,  
Lest the quick waking of old joys should lay  
New sorrows on a heart whose tender beat  
Was chilled by winter cold and hurt by  
summer heat.

LI.

But on the morrow did the lady go  
Straight to Martuccio's house, and greet  
him there

In this wise, and in modest accents low,  
'Pray heed, my lord, the message that I  
bear!

I am a poor weak widow, to whose care  
Heaven has committed one yet more forlorn,  
Who served you once, in many a service  
fair,

Even at Lipari, where you both were born—  
Now does he crave your help, with many  
a sorrow worn.'

LII.

He, wondering in whose need she prayed  
to him,

But stirred at once with sudden joy and  
pain,

Made answer eagerly, his bright eyes dim  
With tears he could not if he would restrain:  
'Pray let me see him—were they not all  
slain?—

A comrade—and from Lipari did you  
say?’—

Then went he with her, to sweet joy again ;  
But with sad seeming she beguiled the way,  
That he might nowise dream how near his  
treasure lay.

## LIII.

O love of severed hearts again made one !  
O joy too deep for any words to tell !  
’Twere well indeed to leave them all alone  
In that transcendent rapture,—O ’twere well  
Not to break in upon love’s holy spell !  
Sweeter than any other bliss, I ween,  
Those first embraces, those first tears that  
fell,  
After the piteous sorrows that had been,—  
All now atoned and lost in love’s own heaven  
serene.

## LIV.

He led her to the king, to whom he told  
The sad sweet story of their woes of late ;  
Who blessed them, and to each fair gifts  
of gold

Gave royally, with all their joy elate :—  
 Then were they wedded with much pomp  
 and state ;  
 And parting all in tears from that good  
 dame,  
 And from the other loth to separate,  
 Over the sea to Lipari they came,  
 Where in great joy they lived and left a noble  
 name.

## VIOLETS.

### I.

A LITTLE city, bordered by green fields,  
And in the heart of it the Minster Close,  
Cool, green, and still ; as still as a small lake  
Set deep among the hills, that takes the sun,  
And takes the flying shadows of the clouds,  
But sleeps and dreams and is its own great  
world.

The Minster sleeps, and all about its front  
The carven angel-heads and effigies  
Sleep also ; such a slumber as may keep  
In open eyes and under stony lids  
The brooding wisdom of the centuries.  
The rooks are noisy in the Bishop's elms,  
But under all their clamour, undisturbed,  
The Minster sward, the shadow-dappled road,  
The many-gabled houses, sleep and dream.

Here, in a quaint room in an old grey house,  
Three ladies sit together ; one, a widow,  
Still fair in middle life and later bloom,  
The gold half changed to silver in her hair  
But gleaming only as a paler gold ;  
The other two, her daughters. The elder girl  
Has all the beauty of her mother's youth,  
Fair, golden, bright ; but over her blue eyes  
A shadow rests, the shadow of a cloud  
That makes them dim and sorrowful : on her  
cheeks

The faintest blush, as in a pink-white rose,  
New-blown, that tempts the colder winds of  
June—

A face the surest index of a heart  
Full of deep feeling, strong to love, to bear ;  
But all her heart speaks frankly from her  
eyes,

And they are sad. Her sister's dark brown  
hair,

And eyes of gipsy blackness, and her cheeks  
Ruddy from blowing winds and open sun,  
Are as a foil that shows in strong relief  
The other's paler loveliness.



‘Poor Frank!’—

The younger spoke—‘Have you no word for him,

No promise, Mary, after all these months?  
They say, “love hard to win is long to last,”  
But long to win may even lose the winning:  
And so it should, I think, if I were Frank.’  
A light heart lightly moved to froward speech,  
Chirping and twittering like a thoughtless bird  
Mad-merry in the thickets of the spring.

Mary was silent, but the listless words  
Fell like a random touch upon a string  
Of all too fine a tension for the stroke.  
Her mother, though she saw not Mary’s tears,  
Chided the prattler: ‘Peace! you giddy girl:  
Frank will not break his word to gain his wish,  
Or ask for Mary’s promise till his own  
Has all been kept. He still will wait a year.’  
‘Alas!’ said Mary, ‘would there were no  
respite!

For though the words are silent on his lips  
Shall I not read them always in his eyes?  
Will not his very silence seem to breathe  
The wish he may not speak? Oh! worst of all,

To bear his watchful silence and my own.  
Should I not rather break the bond at once,  
And save him from the hopes no love of mine  
Can ever satisfy?' 'No, no: wait on:  
A year brings many a change for hearts and  
hopes,

And these sad thoughts may pass. 'Twere  
well they should.

Frank's love is not an idle offering  
To take or leave: the girl that wins his heart  
Will be the richer, giving all her own.'

'True, if she have a heart, that needful gift,  
To give him in return; but I have none,  
Or only the poor ruin of a heart

I dare not either give or let him take.'

'Well, well, my child, wait on and trust to  
time,—

The best of healers and the surest friend:  
Time hath a balm for wounds that fret the more  
For tears that water them.'

'Cruel, cruel time!

Gentle to you, with solace and sweet hope,  
Cruel to me, with still protracted pain.

If but another face might please him better,  
If but another heart in this sad world,  
Unhurt by tears, untouched by other joys,  
Might fill him with its own divine delight  
Of happy love, and worship, and surrender,  
Then love of mine,—what love is mine to  
give,—  
Should crown his joy and seal his happiness.  
But that too precious hope is not for me.'

To know true sorrow one must know true  
joy:

The darkened eye that never saw the light  
Feels not the pains of darkness, but the eye  
Plunged from the sunshine into sudden gloom.  
Great joy, deep sorrow, in those early years  
When few know either, Mary Græme knew  
both.

Reared in a little country parsonage,  
Far out of the great world, her happy life  
Rounded in childhood to its village span  
With flowers and birds and books and  
holidays.

All life was holiday. Her playfellows

Were this pert Cissy with the gipsy eyes,  
And Frank and Jessie Vernon from the Hall—  
Brother and sisters: not an actual bond,  
But in the constant union of their lives  
They seemed no other. So, for year on year,  
The records written in their childish hearts  
Were childish loves, in earnest and in play,  
Mingled with days of nutting, nights of fun,  
The woods, the river, and the cuckoo's song.  
Then came a change, for Frank, almost a man,  
And destined for the army and the Guards,  
Passed on to Sandhurst; and her seventeen  
years—

A perfect primrose-coronal of springs—  
Crowned Mary almost woman.

In those days  
Her father, drooping with enfeebled health,  
Resigned his pastoral labours to another,  
An old friend's son—his curate—Arthur  
Flavell.

Arthur to all a good man's earnestness  
Joined all a young man's fervour; whence it  
came

That though the place was small, the people  
few,

His work was large,—work whose devoted aims  
From lowly levels reached the highest good,—  
For often, in the glooms of that small life,  
He found a sinking soul and lifted it,  
And after many perils left it safe  
In a calm haven, in the smile of God.

Here for her woman's heart was work to  
share,

And Mary claimed her share, and gave her  
heart,

Helping with loving words and gentle hands  
While Arthur laboured. Where her golden  
head

Had flashed like an embodied smile before,  
Bringing unspoken blessings, now she came,  
A ministering angel and a friend,  
Bringing the light of life. Like star and star,  
Companions in one orbit, that diffuse  
One silver radiance of commingled beams,  
They wrought one work together, she and he.  
And shaping act to act, and thought with  
thought,

What wonder that their hearts should each to  
each

Warm and grow fond? Love, rising on their  
lives,

Not in a flash, transfiguring all the world,  
But with the gradual growing light of dawn,  
Gladdened and blest them. Dawn, alas! of joy  
That reaching its full noon-tide passed away,  
And the night came from which there was no  
dawn.

For Arthur took a mortal sickness—caught  
Amid his daily work—and sank, and died;  
And Mary sank, crushed by the cruel blow,  
And though she did not die, her heart and  
hopes

Were buried with him. The black shadow  
of death

Lingered about the village, as loth to pass;  
Nor did it pass until another voice  
Was hushed, and Mary's father followed  
Arthur.

Then was the little Rectory given up,  
And the small household, still to tarry near,  
Moved to the Minster Close.

But what of Frank,  
The bright boy-lover of those early days  
When he and Mary roamed the woods  
together,  
Startling the timid hare, the building thrush,  
That, seeing them, took heart and had no fear?  
He came at intervals back from work to play,  
Expectant of the old delights again  
And romps with Mary; but he found her  
changed—

The same sweet face and loveable true soul,  
But therewithal a manner more restrained,  
A placid patient spirit all unlike  
The Mary that he knew. And while in her  
He saw this change and marvelled, in himself  
Now all at once he found another change;  
His heart, no more as to a sister's heart,  
Throbbled with a love transcending brother's  
love,

Too deep to utter,—far too deep and strong  
To put in mortal language and mere words.  
He told it in his looks, his tones, his sighs,  
Not doubting she would guess it, and assured  
Of sweet assent. Away and at her side

He cherished the full sense of love possessed,  
An unsuspecting faith in love returned,  
And waited for the pledge of lips and hands.

Then came the bitter word of Mary's love  
For Arthur, and the talk of near espousals—  
A mid-day darkness shutting out the day,  
A sudden winter chilling all the world—  
And then, with yet a desperate hope in sadness,  
News of poor Flavell's death. When he saw  
Mary,

The passion of her grief so wrought upon her  
She wept, not willing to be comforted ;  
And he was silent. For long weeks and months  
He checked his thoughts and measured all  
his words,

Lest, in the full devotion of his heart,  
Some word or look should jar upon her grief:—  
But all unspoken his whole heart's true love  
Lived on, and waited for its hour to come.

When Arthur died the woods were red with  
autumn :

The winter came and went, and all the ways  
Burst into song, and all the woods and lanes



Broke into leaf, and it was spring again.  
Mary was guest to Jessie at the Hall,  
And Frank was there, and he resolved to speak.  
It was a day of sunshine, such a day  
As makes the thousand pulses of the earth  
Beat with exultant life, a day of days.  
Frank had led Mary on from field to field,  
Tempting her forth with promise of rare ferns  
In some far mossy hedge beside the river,—  
And gaining that, and resting on a bank  
Dappled with leafy shadow from the glooms  
Of chestnuts, full of jubilant song above,  
He took her hand, and asked her if the spring  
Came not, as in the world it makes so glad,  
Back into saddened hearts and made them glad  
With hope and life again ?

She answered him  
With quivering lips that spoke not, and with  
eyes  
Half-doubting, half-assenting, through their  
tears.

But he, with eloquence quickened by her eyes,  
He told her all his love and all his heart,

And yearned for hers,—hers that she could  
not give !

His love was precious to her as a boon  
That shows the noble goodness of the giver,—  
Precious as all the sweet and gentle things  
That light God's world and make it liker God,—  
But love that gives and claims the heart's  
sole pledge,

Sole service and devotion, not that love  
Could she receive or give. Her heart was  
pledged

To holy memories and a faithful trust,  
Ever to be fulfilled. But Frank was bold,  
Entreating as for what is more than life,  
Better than death, the only good thing else ;  
And Mary, steadfast, but constrained to make  
Some truce that put the 'never' further off,  
Begged him to wait two years, and give his  
thoughts

Free range, that so they might alight at last  
On some fair shrine not alien to his love.  
With gladness, which to her, who heard in it  
The mocking laugh of doom, was loud with  
pain,

Frank seized the slender chance and bound  
himself

Not for two years to sue to her again.

A happy vow : 'Two years ! so soon,' he said,  
'And Mary will be mine, my queen, my bride !'

He joined a regiment going for two years  
To Malta, and he went ; but in a year,  
His regiment being ordered to return,  
Frank was expected back at home, and came  
On that same day when Cissy, in the Close,  
Named him too lightly, moving Mary's tears.

So now the backward-roving tale returns  
To that quaint chamber and the ladies there.  
Mary was sitting in a small recess  
Whose open casement looked upon the Close.  
The evening sunlight on the Minster front  
Shone full on cherub-faces and lit up  
Columns and scrolls of carven tracery ;  
And all the massive masonry in that glow  
Seemed filmy and transparent. High above,  
The three great spires, the symbols of men's  
prayers,

Rose narrowing each to one bright golden star :  
While from within the Minster came the sound  
Of choral voices and of organ chords,  
Making one harmony with the peace without.  
Looking with half-dazed eyes upon the scene,  
Mary exclaimed 'Here's Frank!' And Frank  
    it was,  
Coming with eager strides across the Close.  
Three faces and a crowd of waving hands  
Flashed at the window; in a moment more  
A bounding step, warm greetings on the stair,  
And Frank was with them.

There was much to ask,  
Much to be told, and Mary in the flush  
And first surprise of meeting showed a joy  
Like Cissy's and her mother's; she had ears  
Of simple wonder for his stirring tales,  
Eyes whose quick interest cheered him with  
    a light  
Worth all the year of absence to behold.  
He sat down by her side to talk to her :  
'I am not back too soon if you are glad  
To see me, Mary?'

‘Glad? Should I not be glad?  
The sorrow will be yours, to come away  
From so much pleasant life to our poor quiet.’  
‘Not life, but racket, fun, all that—one *lives*  
In the dear presence of remembered eyes.  
No, I am happiest coming back to you.’  
‘And Jessie, and the other brighter faces;  
The village will be gay to welcome you,  
And Jessie longs for you.’

‘Little Jessie, yes,  
And in a month will want to pack me off.  
As for the dear old home, a year, or ten,  
Or twenty, would have made no difference;  
Come when I might that would have been the  
same.’

‘I hope so, truly; ever, ever the same.  
Your friend is to be Rector; will you tell him  
Our simple people liked the simple ways,  
And they know best. Their love is worth  
the winning.’

‘That—anything—for your sake I will tell him,  
But Cecil Hurst is sure to keep their hearts.  
I always said it would be like old times  
If Hurst were Rector.’

‘That can hardly be,’—  
And Mary sighed,—‘but you have had your  
wish,  
And may it even happen as you say!’  
‘Hurst and his sister are to come this week;  
They stay with Jessie till the Rectory  
Is ready—but my news is old to you?’  
‘Yes, Jessie comes to see us, and sometimes  
I go to her—but that is not—not often.’

Mary would willingly have talked with him  
About his soldier life, and camps, and drills;  
But when the talk drew on, as it must need,  
To things she held so sacred, closely bound  
With that most sacred of all memories,  
Then her heart sank, and she could say no  
more.

Her dreaming thoughts flew back into the  
past,  
To wake again and meet his dreaming thoughts  
Building a happy future: in that moment  
Her own too real sorrow and his hopes,  
As real, made a conflict in her heart  
Too sharp to bear. Turning away her face

To hide the burning tears she could not stay,  
She rose with diffident haste and left the room.  
A cold blank silence fell upon the others :  
Frank muttered some half-heard apology  
For sudden coming, hasty going, and went.  
His step, just now so bounding on the stair,  
Was slow and sad—he saw 'not as he walked—  
A cloud had risen and darkened all his dream.

## II.

Some weeks went by : the trio from the Close  
Were going to stay with Jessie at the Hall,  
And meet the Rector. They were loth to go,  
Dreading the ordeal, but the greater dread  
Was Mary's. On the night before they went  
She turned upon her bed and, could not  
sleep ;  
And when at last she caught some snatch of  
slumber  
The same dark thoughts possessed her, and  
she tried  
Still with a conscious effort to be at rest.  
And out of all that weariness rest came.

Her mind went floating back into the past,  
And on into the future, and of both  
Made its own visible momentary present.  
She dreamed of that old life she loved so  
well,

Of that dear village-home among its trees ;  
Beside her bent one ever-dearest face,  
She heard the best-loved voice in all the  
world ;

And then the vision faded. And again,  
She dreamed she sat beside the rounded turf  
Under the great broad elm where Arthur  
slept :

Twilight was slowly fading into dusk,  
And over all the stillness came a hush  
Of deeper stillness. So sitting, as she dreamed,  
A footstep startled her, and looking up  
She saw a clergyman standing by the grave,  
Bent and bare-headed, holding in his hand  
A bunch of violets. His face was calm,  
Sad, noble, with a look like Arthur's face ;  
The broad white brow, the thin dark hair  
above,

The spiritual dim grey eyes, the lips



Compressed and quivering with emotion,—all,  
By some divine resemblance of the soul,  
Reminded her of Arthur. He stood there  
For some long minutes, while her beating heart  
Made audible answer to his silent words,—  
Silent, on lips that moved as if in prayer.  
Then lovingly he laid the violets down  
Where they would lie above the sleeper's  
breast,

And left them. He walked slowly towards  
the church

And entered it, and Mary followed him ;  
She followed to the altar, where he knelt,  
And knelt by him and heard him speak this  
prayer :

‘ Father ! whose loving and almighty care  
Is over all Thy children, I am weak,  
But Thou hast laid on me this precious charge,  
And Thou wilt fit me for it. Thy servants  
here

Have gathered of Thy children to Thy fold :  
Give me to bring in more and lose not one !  
I follow Christ, whose servant I come after,  
Him on whose grave lie now Thy violets ;



So was she eager ; and the others wondered,  
Cheered by her wistful glances as they went.  
She left them at the little churchyard-gate,  
They driving on, she to walk thence alone,  
A nearer way, by field-paths to the Hall.  
But being all alone she turned aside,  
And threading a small path among the graves  
Made haste to the green spot where Arthur  
slept.

A calm green spot, under a mighty elm,  
Where all day long some little happy heart  
Trills out its pretty trebles and never tires ;  
And morn and evening, when the level sun  
Floods all the topmost-swaying domes with gold,  
The blackbird and the thrush, in rounder notes,  
Pour mellow music as from throats divine.  
With what another heart she came here last !  
The sky was shrouded by the great dark elm,  
No birds made music then, or none for her :—  
When last she came ? But that was yester-  
eve :

She almost ran to see if still there lay  
The violets on his grave. Yes, there they  
were,

Sweet with the freshest sweetness of the  
spring,  
Sacred as on the altar of a shrine  
The purest gifts of love. She doubted not,  
She knew not, thought not, but her soul was  
wrapt  
In a high ecstasy of consciousness,  
In which all memory, all delight and pain,  
Became an unspeakable sense of joyous hope.

A footway from the Rectory meets the path  
That leads beyond the churchyard to the Hall.  
Mary at this point halted on her way,  
And looked—she needs must look and dared  
not go—  
Down to the dear old house. She looked  
and saw  
Coming on towards her, nearer and still  
nearer,  
The self-same face and form she knelt beside,  
Sharing his passion, those few hours ago.  
She felt no shock, but stood without surprise,  
Powerless to move. As he came up to her  
A glance, a quick involuntary look,

Seemed to accord him greeting, and he  
stopped,

Raising his hat, and spoke: 'We have not  
met'—

The voice sent thrills of memory through  
her heart—

'But yet perhaps you know me and I you.'

'You are the Rector?' Mary seemed to ask,  
Saying what well she knew:—'And you,' he  
said,

'Miss Græme.'

She was perplexed and answered him,  
'Seeing you here, mine was an easy guess,  
But nothing could suggest my name to you.'  
'Yes, I was sure of it; I will tell you why.  
I find two cherished memories in this village:  
One, that of him whose labours have made  
hard

And easy both the charge that falls to me,—  
Hard, that I follow one who did so much;  
Easy, in that he left a loving flock  
To welcome a new shepherd. His co-worker  
Shares with him, in these simple people's  
hearts,

The homage of a loving memory.  
Him I imagine as I think he was,  
As I would also be—of her, Miss Græme,  
A pleasant fancy grew upon my mind,  
And you are like it. Her face must be yours.’  
She answered, knowing not what words she  
    said,  
And went her way ; and he went his, apart ;  
Two ways, dividing to converge again.

## III.

With Cecil Hurst his sister, Mabel, came  
To stay with Jessie Vernon at the Hall ;  
And when his house should claim its occupants  
She was to manage it : a year ago  
Still in her pupilage and the schoolroom, now  
Schooled in the smaller knowledge of the  
    world,  
A full-grown woman. She had eyes that  
    beamed,  
And lips that laughed, and cheeks of ready  
    blush,  
And form all supple roundness like a swan’s.

Her tastes were of the manner of her world,  
Bold, masculine ; largely given to horse and  
hound :

A boisterous, brave, thoughtless, handsome girl,  
Fitted to grace the table of the Squire,  
But not the Rector's house. Between these  
two

Was now the prettiest contrast in the world,  
Mary and Mabel, in one house together.

And Frank saw much of both. He rode  
and lounged  
With Mabel, and then mixed the grave and  
gay  
By little talks with Mary. She was grave  
Only beside the gay, for now again  
She came to be the Mary of those days  
When they were brother and sister, boy and  
girl.

But Mabel's fascinations grew upon him ;  
She gave him playful looks and pretty smiles,  
And dressed, rode, walked, did anything to  
please him.

When from the freer pleasures of her charms

He came again to Mary, conscience-stricken,  
Her goodness piqued him—she had no re-  
proach

For all that idle dalliance, not a word  
Of blame or pity for his straying loves ;  
But all as kindly as she ever did  
Gave him one welcome, whether true or truant,  
Herself the same true sister and no more.  
And Frank was often glad to break away,  
And give his thoughts, his moments, and his  
hours

To her whose hours and days were all for him.

One day he rode with Mabel through the  
village,

And as they passed a little garden-plot  
Green-sloping from a cottage to the lane,  
They saw this picture:—Mary was leading  
out,

Supporting as she led, a bent old woman ;  
And Cecil Hurst was piling in a chair,  
Set in the sun, some cushions for her head.  
'There, now,' said Mabel, 'what a pretty  
sight !



Some angel must have brought that pair together :

If ever twain were meant for man and wife  
They are.'

Frank heard the words without a pang :  
Spoken a week since—gall and bitterness ;  
Now—a glad revelation and a light.

That evening he found Mary all alone.  
'Mary,' he said, 'a selfish wish of mine  
Has given you trouble I had best have spared  
you.'

'How, Frank? You are the very kindest  
brother.'

'Yes, we were brother and sister—'

'Are so still?—'

Her look of pained concern almost undid  
His half-reluctant purpose. 'True, dear  
heart,

But I was eager to be something more.  
You bade me wait two years, and by that  
bidding

Pledged both yourself and me till two years  
end :

I would not have you bound—you shall be free.'

She looked into his face to find the meaning  
She guessed not from his words; but he said  
on—

'I love you, Mary, but I know at last  
That other love than sister's in return  
I cannot ask of you—you cannot give:  
So let me be your brother, and you still  
Shall be my sister, and you will be happy.'  
She whispered but these words, 'God bless  
you, Frank!'

But all her heart of hearts was in that prayer.  
She saw the little lessening cloud of doom  
Fade wholly from his future and from hers.

Mary, devoted as in other days,  
Had once again begun her loving work;  
Her feet were on all thresholds, and no hearth  
Lacked the familiar blessing of her smile.  
One evening, as she walked alone towards  
home

From some sick patient she had comforted,  
Cecil Hurst met her, he had gone to meet her,

And turned and walked with her. He knew  
her errand,  
And making that the token of his plea  
Besought her: 'Mary, this dear work of yours  
Can never be well done except by you:  
For my sake, and the sake of all these hearts  
That love you, stop with us and be my wife.'  
With trembling lips, as from a heart that  
shook,  
She murmured—'Let us go to Arthur's grave;  
His love has blest us both and made us one.  
There let me answer you.'

She led the way  
Through the long churchyard-grasses to a  
place  
Where violets grew, and gathering some her-  
self,  
Asked him to pluck some; then by the green  
mound  
Under the elm-tree she thus answered him:—  
'For your sake, and for his to whom we owe  
This union of our lives, I love you, yes,  
I love you dearly, and will be your wife.

Let us bestow these violets on his grave ;  
Their simple beauty typifies his own,  
Their fragrance is the fragrance of his name  
Among this people, his, and yours, and mine.  
Now at God's altar let us kneel and pray,  
And with this prayer, that He will touch our  
lips,

Our souls, with that all-consecrating fire  
By which He sealed our lost one to Himself !'  
' Mary, dear Mary, I have done these things,  
Spoken these words, and prayed with this  
same prayer—

All in a dream : it must have been a dream.'

' Mine was the dream, yours the reality !  
And this is real, and life and love are real,  
And real the blessing we will pray for there.'

THE END.

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